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2014 Dodge Durango Goes Far (and Wide) to Trump Competition

- Award-winning Pentastar V-6 delivers a best-in-class driving range – more than 600 miles – for a gasoline-powered sport-utility (SUV)
- New class-exclusive standard eight-speed automatic transmission on V-6 and V-8 engines boosts fuel economy as much as 9 percent
- New Eco Mode optimizes throttle performance, transmission shift schedule
- Pentastar V-6 engine delivers up to 295 horsepower for best-in-class V-6 power
- Available 5.7-liter V-8 engine delivers best-in-class 360 horsepower and 390 lb.-ft. torque
- Best-in-class tow ratings – up to 7,400 pounds with HEMI V-8 engine; 6,200 pounds with Pentastar V-6 engine

March 27, 2013, New York City - With its new, standard-equipment eight-speed automatic transmission – which delivers quicker acceleration, smoother shifting and improved efficiency – the three-row 2014 Dodge Durango cuts a wide swath through the full-size sport-utility (SUV) segment.

“The eight-speed transmission’s wide ratio spread is a key factor in the upgraded performance of the 2014 Dodge Durango,” said Mircea Gradu, Vice President and Head of Transmission Powertrain and Driveline Engineering. “It enhances the overall driving experience, delivering tangible customer value.”

The new transmission’s 7.03 ratio spread affords the best possible fuel economy by operating at the lowest possible rpm in both city and highway environments, both of which are enhanced by the Dodge Durango’s hallmark blend of refinement and responsiveness.

When mated with the award-winning 3.6-liter Pentastar V-6, the benefits of the new transmission are highlighted by the 2014 Dodge Durango’s best-in-class driving range of more than 600 miles – more than any other gasoline-powered full-size SUV and a gain of more than 12 percent from the 2013 Durango’s best-in-class range. Drivers can go all the way from New York City to Detroit without having to stop to refuel.

For 2014, a standard rotary knob replaces the shifter handle, while standard paddle controls afford manual shifting capability. In automatic mode, gear changes are nearly imperceptible because of the evenly spaced steps between each gear ratio.

The eight-speed transmission consists of four gear sets and five shift elements (multi-disc clutches and brakes). Only two shift elements are open at any time, reducing the drag losses that come with maintaining the rotation of multiple components.

The fully electronic eight-speed automatic features on-the-fly shift map changing. More than 40 individual shift maps for specific conditions optimize shift quality and shift points for fuel economy, performance and drivability.

Adaptive controls take into account variables including engine torque gradients, kick-down events, longitudinal and lateral acceleration, grade changes, friction detection and downshift detection to determine the appropriate shift map. Additional parameters integrated into the control strategy include vehicle speed control, electronic stability control interaction and temperature. The result is automatic shifting ideally attuned to the performance requirements of almost any driving demand.

Pentastar V-6 among industry's top engines

Named one of Ward's 10 Best Engines for three years running, the 3.6-liter Pentastar V-6 engine helps boost the 2014 Dodge Durango's fuel economy as much as 9 percent, compared with the prior model year.

The standard flex-fuel 3.6-liter Pentastar V-6 engine generates 290 horsepower and 260 lb.-ft. of torque on SXT, Limited and Citadel, and a best-in-class 295 horsepower on Rallye. Combined with the new eight-speed automatic transmission, a Pentastar-equipped Durango can tow a best-in-class 6,200 pounds.

The 3.6-liter double-overhead cam (DOHC) V-6 features high-flow intake and exhaust ports, which in combination with variable-valve timing (VVT) and dual independent cam phasing, allow optimum volumetric and combustion efficiency across the vehicle's performance spectrum. The new Durango's exceptionally flat torque curve is another hallmark achievement.

The engine's torque exceeds 90 percent of its peak from 1,900 rpm to 6,400 rpm, which affords outstanding drivability and responsiveness.

Structural elements of its intake and exhaust areas also deliver low levels of overall noise and achieve specific sound-quality goals that meet the requirements of discerning customers.

The Pentastar engine comes standard with an integrated oil cooler as part of the oil-filter adapter assembly. The filters' breakthrough design also contributes to a greener environment. Oil can be extracted from used filters to accommodate incineration.

Further enhancing the Pentastar's value is its use of long-life, 100,000-mile spark plugs and a high-energy coil-on-plug ignition system. Both help reduce vehicle ownership cost.

Best-in-class power and towing

Fuel economy improvements are not exclusive to the Pentastar-powered Dodge Durango. The 5.7-liter V-8 engine produces a best-in-class 360 horsepower and 390 lb.-ft. of torque, and boasts best-in-class towing capacity of 7,400 pounds. Equipped with all-wheel drive (AWD), the V-8 Durango can pull 7,200 pounds.

Mated to the new eight-speed transmission and helped by variable-valve timing (VVT), as well as Chrysler Group's seamless Fuel Saver Technology with cylinder-deactivation, the V-8 models now offer a fuel-economy improvement of up to 5 percent.

The 5.7-liter engine's VVT improves efficiency two ways. It reduces the engine's pumping efforts by closing the intake valve later, and it increases the expansion process of the combustion event. This allows more energy to be transferred to the crankshaft, instead of being expelled from an exhaust port as heat. VVT improves engine breathing, which further improves engine efficiency and power.

The 5.7-liter engine's Fuel Saver Technology with cylinder-deactivation seamlessly alternates between smooth, highly efficient four-cylinder operation when power demand is lessened and robust V-8 mode when demand is increased. This optimizes fuel economy without sacrificing vehicle performance or capability.

Eco Mode further improves fuel efficiency

The 2014 Dodge Durango features a new Eco Mode that contributes to its improved fuel economy. Eco Mode optimizes throttle performance, transmission shift schedule and, in V-8 models, Fuel Saver Technology. Eco Mode also manages interactive deceleration fuel shut-off (IDFSO), which cuts fuel delivery when the vehicle is coasting to reduce fuel consumption.

Eco Mode is automatically engaged upon vehicle startup. A button on the center stack allows driver's to disengage Eco Mode if more spirited performance is desired.

Refined and responsive

Complementing the 2014 Dodge Durango's powertrain upgrades are a host of design features that contribute to

outstanding ride and handling, attributes consistent with the vehicle's reputation as a driver's SUV.

More than 5,500 welds – including 4,100 mm of arc welding – lend torsional stiffness to the Dodge Durango's unibody construction. High-strength and ultra-high-strength steels comprise 52 percent of the three-row SUV's sturdy skeleton. Closed-section front and rear cross-members further boost stiffness.

Durango's four-wheel independent suspension delivers additional ride-and-handling benefits, which are further enhanced by the vehicle's isolated suspension cradles. Available skid plates guard against damage on rough roads, which pose no problems for the Dodge Durango. The three-row Dodge Durango features larger sway bars to manage body roll and its shock and spring rates are up to 10 percent stiffer.

The twin-tube shocks that supplement the multi-link rear suspension also offer load-leveling capability. When the vehicle's payload increases, the system automatically responds by increasing ride height to the optimum level.

Additional cooling capacity and standard trailer-sway control further boost the Dodge Durango's capability.

Pentastar-powered versions of the Durango also feature electro-hydraulic power steering (EHPS), which based on vehicle speed alters the amount of required driver effort. Low speeds trigger increased pump power to accommodate less effort. Pump power is reduced at highway speeds to afford a firmer feel.

As a side benefit, EHPS delivers greater efficiency. Because the pump is belt-driven, the system consumes less energy and delivers fuel savings of up to 3.5 percent.

The 2014 Dodge Durango's rear-wheel-drive-based drivetrain is the foundation for its outstanding on-road driving performance. Available all-wheel drive (AWD) further enhances driver confidence by leveraging the SUV's 50/50 weight distribution.

The Durango's two AWD systems – one for the V-8 and one for Pentastar V-6 powered models – greatly enhance the vehicle's traction and handling by delivering a smooth driving experience on a wide range of road conditions.

While competitors have switched to car-based platforms, the HEMI-powered AWD Durango features a low-range transfer case with a neutral position. Low range improves light off-road performance and helps ease maneuvers such as pulling a boat up a steep launch or backing up with a trailer. The neutral position in the transfer case allows the Durango to be flat-towed without damaging powertrain components.

The Dodge Durango's drag coefficient of approximately 0.35 contributes to efficiency, while also reducing cabin noise. Interior quietness is further improved by extensive use of acoustic materials, including laminated front-door glass.

In addition, the 2014 Dodge Durango features a double wall separating the engine compartment from the cabin – where there is no shortage of space. The independent rear suspension frees enough real estate to allow stowage of the full-size spare tire beneath the vehicle, alternately leaving more room for cargo behind the third-row seats.

Available bi-xenon high-intensity discharge (HID) headlamps make the outside world more visible. Auto-leveling technology adjusts beam area for slight changes in elevation. Four-inch projector fog lamps are standard equipment on all Durango models.

And for those who also like to be seen, the Dodge Durango can be had with 20-inch wheels and tires.

All things considered, the 2014 Dodge Durango busts the SUV segment wide open.

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*Fuel economy estimates are based on manufacturer's testing.

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