

Automotive News

GM will idle Corvette plant for 6 months to prepare for new model

2014 version set for Jan. 13 showing

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DETROIT -- Chevrolet plans to end production of the 2013 Corvette in February and idle the sport car's assembly plant in Bowling Green, Ky., for six months as it retools for the highly anticipated all-new model.

Production of the redesigned 2014 Corvette is scheduled to begin in August or September next year, General Motors said today.

GM said it has told Chevy dealers the factory will stop accepting guaranteed specific orders for the 2013 Corvette at the end of October. Dealers can continue to submit orders for the 2013 Corvette, the last of the sixth-generation of the car, until the end of December. But GM won't guarantee that a specific combination of trim level and options will be built.

The redesigned 2014 Corvette is expected to be slightly shorter and significantly lighter than the current car, with an upgraded, more comfortable interior.

Corvette chief engineer Tadge Juechter notes that only two parts are being carried over from the 2013 Corvette to the new car: the cabin air filter and the rear latch for the removable roof panel.

"With the new Corvette, we set out to build a world-challenging sports car with design, refinement, efficiency and driver engagement that is second to none," **Juechter said in a statement.**

The new Corvette will make its public debut Jan. 13, on the eve of press preview days for the Detroit auto show.

To generate advance interest, Chevrolet today released an image of the sports car's redesigned Crossed Flags emblem. The new emblem is "much more modern, more technical and more detailed than before, underscoring the comprehensive redesign of the entire car," GM design chief Ed Welburn said in the statement.

A key component of the new Corvette, known as the C7 for seventh-generation car, is a new engine that will mark the fifth generation of GM's small-block V8. The new engine was designed for the Corvette but will also be used in GM's redesigned full-sized pickups and SUVs, which will also debut at the Detroit show.

Details on the new small-block V8 are set to be released on Oct. 24.

The history of the Crossed Flags emblems begins with the original Corvette concept car that was unveiled at the GM Motorama show at the Waldorf Astoria hotel in New York City on Jan. 17, 1953.

The original emblem used racing's checkered flag crossed with the American flag. Because the American flag couldn't be used on a commercial property, the emblem was changed to Chevrolet bowtie and the fleur-de-lis for the production Corvette, which started rolling off a temporary assembly line in Flint, Mich., in late June 1953.