2013 New York Auto Show - 2014 Toyota Highlander World Debut

March 27, 2013

2013 New York International Auto Show
2014 Toyota Highlander Reveal
Galleria Ballroom – Javits Center
Wednesday, March 27, 2013
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Good morning everyone, and thanks for helping us kick off the 2013 New York Auto Show.

It's hard to believe a year's gone by since we showed you the stunning new Avalon right here in this room. Launched in November, sales have been outstanding, with an increase of nearly 60% so far this year. The Avalon Hybrid has offered the segment… for the first time… a comfortable, stylish premium sedan that "truly" gets 40-mpg, better than the vast majority of compacts and subcompacts on the road today.

On the heels of Avalon came the all-new RAV4, which has been in high demand at dealerships since it arrived in January. It is now the quickest selling vehicle in the Toyota line up.

Sales of the new Avalon and RAV4, along with Camry's continued position as America's top-selling passenger car, have led the way to a great sales year so far. Toyota Division sales are up 13.9 percent, outpacing the industry by 40 percent.

In addition to strong sales, last week we hosted Fin O'Neill of J.D. Power at our California headquarters, where he presented our associates seven Vehicle Dependability Study awards… more than any other automaker. Lexus was again number one in the industry, and Toyota was the number one full-line brand, finishing fourth overall behind three luxury makes.

We've recently launched new models in a number of segments, including the Avalon and RAV4, and now… were looking forward to an all-new mid-size SUV. This is one of the largest segments in the industry, and it also has a diverse group of buyers, with a wide range of ages and life stages.

We're the only manufacturer to offer four different Mid-size SUVs to meet all their needs…

- 4Runner appeals to an active buyer who is young or younger in spirit, and it's one of only two body-on-frame models left in the segment …
- And the other is the FJ Cruiser, made for off-road enthusiasts who take on the toughest terrain they can find…
- Venza has a great mix of comfort and convenience for Baby Boomers who have a very active life…
- And the Highlander is loved by families who lead an active lifestyle… offering a combination of capability, comfort, performance, and fuel efficiency, not found in any other segment.

As we planned for the 3rd-generation Highlander, we spoke to mid-size SUV owners, who mentioned a few key areas that were most important to them.

We listened and made improvements where it counts for consumers. Our goal was to create a mid-size SUV with "No Sacrifice…"

Current owners told us that Highlander is "just the right size" for maneuverability, but that it could use some extra space. So, we increased passenger seating capacity AND cargo capacity through structural changes and a close attention to interior packaging. We were able to achieve this without greatly expanding the external size of the vehicle.

They also told us they wanted dynamic styling, a premium interior, and a great balance of comfort and utility… and they wanted an SUV that is "fun to drive."

Owners also appreciate the peace of mind Highlander gives them, with Toyota's DNA of Quality, Durability and Reliability. It is Consumer Reports' highest-rated mid-size SUV, and it recently received U.S. News & World Report's 2013 "Best Cars for Families" award. So we took great care to ensure the new Highlander would inspire the same confidence in owners.

Since Highlander is part of the family, and we wanted to make the all-new model the ultimate mid-size crossover SUV, helping people go places and make memories… together.

Ladies and gentlemen, the all-new 2014 Highlander…

(REVEAL)

We think it will "wow" buyers with its sophisticated look and feel, both inside and out. Designers created a sleek but strong exterior while improving interior comfort at the same time.

You can see this in new front fascia, with a trapezoidal grille, sweeping headlights, LED daytime running lights, and chiseled front and rear fenders.

The striking 19-inch Chromtec® alloy wheels compliment a higher beltline and sleek green house, creating a dynamic profile.

While adding to the clean silhouette, positioning of the A-pillar allows for excellent visibility, while larger rear quarter-panel glass gives a more open feeling for both the driver and 3rd row occupants.

The interior was optimized to provide a level of comfort on the inside that defies its exterior size. It has an exceptional blend of contemporary styling and utility that provides an overall premium atmosphere with advanced functionality.

Meticulous attention was paid to common touch points like the steering wheel and shift knob, by adding soft-touch materials throughout.

There is truly a place for everything, with enhanced interior space that allows for efficient use of storage and cargo areas – including a unique in-dash shelf that offers outstanding convenience for both driver and passenger, and it's the perfect spot to stash your sunglasses or mobile phone.

A unique roll-top center console provides a comfortable armrest when open or closed, and with a 24.5-liter volume, it can also hold a large bag or purse, or a surplus of items.

A new double-wishbone rear-suspension removes the old strut towers, allowing for additional cargo capacity, and a redesigned 3rd-row seat for up to three people. It is nearly four-and-a-half inches wider… with easy folding operation, a reclining function, and easier egress and ingress… helping provide comfortable seating for

up to 8 passengers overall.

Since its inception, Highlander has consistently provided a quiet, comfortable ride. Highlander's engineers improved driving dynamics for those who want a feeling of excitement in their daily driving without sacrificing comfort or utility.

The new rear suspension… partnered with a newly tuned MacPherson front suspension… provides improved handling and a smoother ride.

To provide a reduced roll rate and an agile driving experience, tuning was optimized on the Electronic Power Steering… spot welds were increased for better rigidity… and coil-spring structure was improved.

Highlander will continue to offer both front-wheel drive and all-wheel drive, with the latter adopting the Dynamic Torque Control AWD system. This feature helps provide impressive maneuverability around town, superior traction, a more direct steering feel, and better fuel efficiency.

The third-generation Highlander offers customers powertrain options that best fit their needs, with a 2.7-liter four cylinder, and our robust 3.5-liter V6. A new 6-speed Automatic Transmission will be mated to the V6, enhancing both the driving experience and fuel economy.

For buyers who value fuel efficiency as much as utility, Highlander will continue to offer the segment's only Hybrid option, delivering fuel economy better than most of the compact SUVs on the market today.

A number of new steps were adopted to further reduce overall Noise, Vibration and Harshness to levels quieter than most luxury SUVs on the road.

Highlander will continue to build upon its reputation for family friendly features and offer new consumer technologies that befit a premium SUV.

Both front and second-row passengers have the option of heated seats, and ventilated seats are available for front passengers. The use of new materials and redesigned seats add to a more satisfying riding experience; and second-row passengers can enjoy captain's seats or a bench that seats three. Drivers will appreciate the heated steering wheel on cold winter days like those we've had so far this year.

An available Panoramic Moonroof with power sunshade offers a spacious interior feeling, while an adjustable power rear liftgate with customizable height settings makes loading and unloading cargo hassle-free.

Mid-size SUV owners told us they want user-friendly technologies that make their drive easier and more entertaining. The new Highlander delivers, with standard Display Audio, which also comes with an Integrated Backup Camera, or an optional 8-inch touch screen Navigation with our Entune™ multimedia system. The shelf on the dash includes easy access to USB, Aux and 12-volt power, making it easy to integrate an iPod or smartphone into the head unit… and an eye-catching new 4.2-inch Multi-Information Display in the meter cluster provides a premium look and easy access to important information.

Highlander includes new features that will help give the driver a greater sense of security, including a Blind-Spot Monitor with Rear Cross Traffic Alert, Lane Departure Alert System, Auto High Beam headlamps, and a Pre-collision System with Dynamic Cruise Control.

In addition to eight standard airbags, Highlander – like all Toyotas – will feature our exclusive STAR Safety System, with Vehicle Stability Control and Smart Stop Technology, among others, as well as our available Safety Connect system.

When it goes on sale early next year, all Toyota Highlanders… both gas and hybrid models… will be built **exclusively** in the U.S. by our dedicated team members at Toyota Motor Manufacturing Indiana.

Representing the 4,500 team members, please welcome the president of TMMI… Norm Bafunno.

To kick off Highlander's debut, we will be introducing an exciting new partnership… beginning this summer… with Nickelodeon and SpongeBob SquarePants, America's top animated show for the past 10 years. Loved by kids across the country, this partnership will engage Highlander families in a fun, unique way.

As I mentioned earlier, Toyota is in the middle of a fast-paced "Product Renaissance," one of the most extensive in my 30 years with the company. And this year, we're excited to introduce seven all-new or redesigned Toyota and Scion products.

Along with the new RAV4, recent enhancements to the Venza, and something coming soon with the 4Runner… the all-new Highlander will continue a rebirth of our SUV line up.

With an amazing new design, premium interior, advanced technologies, and a fun-to-drive spirit, Highlander will give families the perfect balance of comfort and utility they want to "Go Places" and "make memories."

Thank you again for joining us this morning. We have a beautiful new silver Highlander in the Toyota display as well. I'd like to invite photographers to come up on stage first for some additional images.