

Toyota to Heat Up Frigid Chicago with Action-Packed Auto Show

January 31, 2014

CHICAGO, Ill., January 31, 2014 – With the Midwest in the grip of one of the coldest winters on record, Toyota is looking to bring some “sizzle” to the city of Chicago. Toyota will be busy making news at the Chicago Auto Show this February, due in part to two press conferences and the presence of the FT-1, the most talked-about concept car on the planet.

The Chicago Auto Show kicks off at 8 a.m. on Thursday, February 6 with Toyota Senior Vice President of Automotive Operations Bob Carter delivering the keynote address at the Midwest Automotive Media Association (MAMA) breakfast. Celebrating 23 years at Toyota, Carter regularly attends the Chicago Auto Show.

Toyota will be hosting its first news conference of the day at 9:30 a.m. at the Toyota Drive Center area in South Hall. Toyota will debut the new TRD Pro Series for the Tundra, Tacoma and 4Runner in an area reminiscent of an adventurous desert landscape. Spanning 30,000 square feet, the course’s dynamic obstacles include a 14-foot-tall hill, a water crossing, a giant see-saw and various frame twistlers, side tilts and suspension-focused challenges.

This ride and drive area will be open to the press during Media Days, as well as for show attendees during Public Days. In conjunction with this indoor activity, Toyota has partnered with three esteemed charities in the company’s “Drive for A Cause” campaign. For those show attendees who fully participate in the indoor ride and drive, they will have the opportunity to choose from one of the three charities – American Red Cross, AMVETS and FFA – and Toyota will make a contribution to that organization on their behalf.

Toyota will make a motorsports announcement at its second press conference on February 6 at 2 p.m. in the Toyota exhibit.

This year, the 45,000-square-foot Toyota exhibit features more than 50 vehicles, among them the FT-1 sports car concept, which had a rousing debut at the North American International Auto Show. Developed by Toyota’s Caltex Design Studio, the FT-1 has gotten pulses racing and tongues wagging ever since its unveiling in Detroit.

“The FT-1 will be front and center in Chicago,” said Don Johnson, Auto Show Engagement Manager at Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A., Inc. “It’s been a while since Toyota had a concept that stirred the imagination like FT-1. This is a dream car for enthusiasts everywhere.”

Fans of the FT-1 can drive the vehicle virtually, courtesy of a pair of driving simulators.

Another unique concept vehicle coming to Chicago this year is the Toyota FV2, a future mobility car operated by the driver shifting his or her body to intuitively move the vehicle in any direction. By using intelligent transport system technology to connect with other vehicles in the area and traffic infrastructure, the Toyota FV2 helps enable safe driving by providing a wide variety of safety information, including advance warning about vehicles in blind spots at intersections.

The futuristic iROAD concept car is also coming to the Windy City. The iROAD, a three-wheeler with motorcycle-like maneuverability, is ideally suited for short-distance urban travel and was designed to be a new way to enjoy mobility.

The exhibit will also feature Toyota's entire lineup of award-winning cars and trucks, among them recently-revised 2014 editions of the Corolla, RAV4, Tundra, 4Runner and Highlander. The Highlander is the focus of a Toyota television advertisement around the Super Bowl, co-starring the Muppets. To commemorate this partnership, there will be a Muppets-wrapped Highlander in the exhibit, along with the chance to play three iPad games, featuring these iconic characters interacting with this popular SUV.

Toyota's prowess in hybrid technology will be featured with all four members of the Prius "family" on display, as well as hybrid versions of the Avalon, Camry and Highlander. A charging station for the environmentally-lauded Prius Plug-In can also be found in the exhibit.

Motorsports fans will be thrilled by the "Toyota Racing Zone," an area that pays homage to the manufacturer's involvement and success in NASCAR. A Matt Kenseth #20 Sprint Cup Camry is among the highlights in the zone, along with a Toyota/NHRA Funny Car. Show goers will also enjoy participating in the paper airplane toss at the Tundra/Endeavour space shuttle display, with prizes awarded for successfully landing a plane in the bed of the truck.