

Kia Optima Hybrid rolls into D.C. at the WAPA June meeting held at Indigo Landing.



## Kia Crowns Best Ever Year with Optima Hybrid

Even the gods want a Kia these days. The Super Bowl Ad that featured Aztecs, Aliens and Greek gods snatching the Kia Optima away from each other boosted Kia's Internet searches by 700% and its buy consideration by 255%, Adam Perlow, director of sales for Kia Motors America, said at the June WAPA meeting.

"This year was an historic year for Kia Motors America," said Perlow. "In addition to recording the company's best-ever sales and the 16th consecutive year of increased market share, KMA also launched its first U.S. built vehicle, the 2011 Sorento CUV. The Sorento was the brand's best-selling vehicle each month and became the first Kia nameplate to sell more than 100,000 units in the U.S. in one year."

Begun as a bicycle manufacturer in Korea in 1951, Kia moved up to motor scooters, motorcycles and then to cars in 1973. Kia opened its first four automobile dealers in the U.S. in 1992 in Portland, Oregon selling the Sephia compact sedan. Kia vehicles were always priced to sell, but reliability

problems and design doldrums kept Kia under the radar for most auto buyers.

The Asian financial crisis squeezed Kia into bankruptcy and forced a merger with Hyundai. However, Kia Motor America is a completely separate entity from Hyundai in the U.S.

"We have separate factories, separate design studios," said Perlow. "We see Hyundai as our key competitor. We don't talk to each other. We go our separate ways. Kia is focusing on young, sporty, value-oriented customers with cool cars. Hyundai is focusing on the luxury market."

Kia has outlived its original bad rep by doubling down on quality and reliability while keeping pricing affordable. It introduced the first 100,000 mile drive train warranty, and other manufacturers followed suit. But it still had a ho-hum style. That changed when Peter Schreyer became Chief Design Officer. He joined Kia from Audi where he designed the TT. Also on board the design team is Tom Keams who switched



over from GM where he oversaw the design of the Cadillac CTS. The 2011 Optima won the Red Dot Design Award, the Top Ten Best Buy Auto at Fondo, Edmond's Inside Line 2011 Editor's Most Wanted and the 2010 IIHS Top

Safety Pick.

Kia is going after the youth market with its Soul hyped by Michelle Wie as the official Soul ambassador and spokesperson and with its iconic hamster ads.

Optima debuted last December in a brand new segment for Kia. The 25/34mpg turbo charged mid-sized sedan even enticed luxury car owners to trade-in their high priced rides for the Optima (9% of buyers were previous luxury owners).

The Optima is produced in Kia's West Point, GA plant alongside the Sorento CUV, the brand's best-selling vehicle. A third shift begins at the plant this month, adding 3,000 more hires.

The Optima Hybrid is priced to start at \$26,500, and estimated to get 36/40mpg. It is Kia's first hybrid in the U.S. and the automaker vows not to sacrifice style, comfort or value for fuel efficiency.

The 2011 Optima Hybrid uses a full parallel hybrid system and can be driven in zero emission, full-electric drive mode at speeds up to 62 miles per hour or in blended gas-electric mode at any speed. When the car comes to a stop and the electrical load is low, the engine shuts off to completely eliminate idle fuel consumption and emissions.

The Optima Hybrid uses a lithium polymer battery, which was developed in South Korea with partner LG Chem. The power and energy density of this new battery type allowed Kia engineers to create a lighter and more compact battery pack, with the 30 kilowatt battery pack weighing just 95.9 pounds – 28 pounds less than the 2011 Toyota Camry Hybrid's nickel metal hydride pack – which aids fuel economy and also helps to maximize Optima's cargo space.

The Optima Hybrid uses a typical step-ratio automatic transmission. The compact six-speed automatic that debuted on the 2011 Kia Sorento CUV is carried over to the hybrid largely unchanged. An external electrically-driven oil pump also has been added to provide the hydraulic fluid pressure needed to keep the clutches engaged when the vehicle is in idle stop mode.

Taking advantage of the instant and continuously available torque from the electric motor, Kia engineers modified its popular 2.4-liter Theta II engine to operate on an Atkinson cycle,

raising the compression ratio by 20 percent to maximize its efficiency and achieving a 10-percent fuel saving over a regular Theta engine. This cycle generates a little less torque, but the electric motor compensates for any loss and consequently, the Optima Hybrid's overall power and torque outputs are greater than the regular model.

The Hybrid adds to the list of Optima standard features an eight-way power adjustable driver's seat, dual zone automatic temperature control with rear vents, push-button start with smart key, leather-wrapped steering wheel and shift knob, automatic up/down on front windows, chrome interior door handles, glove box illumination, rear reading lamps, and fixed rear seats with ski pass-through. Virtual Engine Sound System (VESS), standard on the Optima Hybrid, plays a pre-recorded engine sound during electric-only operation to alert pedestrians that it is approaching.

Standard safety features include six airbags, front active headrests, side impact door beams, tire pressure monitoring system, electronic stability control, traction control, a brake assist system, and hill assist control.

Looking at the year ahead, Perlow said he expected it to be a good year. "Last year, if our dealers sold 50 vehicles in a month, it was a good month. This year, they are selling 100 or more a month. Value, has never been so cool."

View the entire presentation at:

<http://youtu.be/6Up1Eo5pwhE>

<http://youtu.be/W0pflyhnkUc>

<http://youtu.be/DbS82SOSrkU>

<http://youtu.be/yOIU96v5B5s>



Adam Perlow (right) director of sales KMA and Steve Kosowski manager product planning KMA take questions at the June WAPA meeting.

# WAPA Grapevine...

The winner of the Early Membership Renewal Contest was **Ron Amadon**. Now, Ron is the proud owner of an Apple iPod Touch. Thanks to all who renewed their memberships early.

**Randi Payton**, founder, president and publisher of Decisive Media, LLC will be honored at the annual Florida Minority Community Economic Summit, produced by the Florida Minority Community Reinvestment Coalition (FMCRC). Held In partnership with Florida Coalition of the Minority Bar Association and the Asian-American Federation of Florida.

**Jeep** took WAPA journalists to the National's Ball Park to watch the Nationals chalk up their sixth win in a row. WAPA members got to the ball park early to get a walk-around of the new Jeep models. Towards the end of the presentation, the skies opened and we were treated to a short lived, but heavy rain. However, hardy WAPA members remained to the soggy end after Lisa Barrow, ever prepared, handed out umbrellas.

**Washington Auto Show dates announced.** **Wednesday, Jan. 25**, is the date of the **Capitol Hill Summit** focusing on "pressing issues in the industry and how policy can deliver progress." The press day or **Public Policy Day is scheduled for Thursday, January 26** at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center for a full day of press events and announcements, highlighted by government and industry keynotes.

For sponsorship information, contact Barbara Pomerance, bp@pomeranceassociates.com; for space information, contact Show Director Robert Yoffe, at bob@yoffeexpo.com.



## WAPA July 20 Meeting Susan M. Cischke, Ford Motor Company Noon, National Press Club

Susan M. Cischke, Group Vice President, Sustainability, Environment and Safety Engineering, Ford Motor Company, will be joining WAPA on July 20 at the Press Club to discuss fuel efficient products and safety innovations.

Cischke guides Ford's long range sustainability strategy and environmental policy which aims to achieve a 30 percent reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 2020. Cischke is responsible for influencing future environmental and safety regulations and assuring that Ford meets or exceeds all safety and environmental regulations worldwide. She is also responsible for establishing Ford's long term safety strategy, promoting aggressive standardization of product technology features delivering real world safety benefits. As Ford's top environmental and safety officer, she leads the Driving Skills for Life program, a partnership between Ford Motor Company and the Governor's State Highway Traffic Association that teaches safe driving technique to teens.

In 2008, the Automotive Hall of Fame honored Cischke with its Distinguished Service Citation. In 1997, Cischke received the Horace H. Rackham Award for outstanding humanitarian achievements from the Engineering Society of Detroit, the first woman in the society's 102-year history to win the award. RSVP at our Web site: <http://washautopress.org/registration.asp>.



# President's Message...

I'm happy to report that the new WAPA directory is here (watch your mailbox). It's a favorite networking tool of WAPA members. Look through it and reconnect with your colleagues.

Washington, D.C. has been a hotspot for automotive news in the last month.

The biennial Enhanced Safety of Vehicles Conference came to the United States this year. The conference promotes global collaboration in automotive safety and works to reduce motor vehicle fatalities and injuries from traffic crashes. In attendance at the conference were representatives from 13 countries and two international commissions.

EcoCAR, the three-year collegiate advanced vehicle technology engineering competition established by the United States Department of Energy (DOE) and General Motors (GM), and managed by Argonne National Laboratory, chose their winner--Virginia Tech. Sixteen universities across North America were challenged to reduce the environmental impact of vehicles by minimizing the vehicle's fuel consumption and reducing its emissions while retaining the vehicle's performance, safety and consumer appeal. In addition to the bonding among the sixteen schools, some students were able to find jobs because of the networking opportunities. Look for these students to be apart of the auto industry's next advances.

Our June luncheon featured Kia Motors America. Adam Perlow, director, sales, KMA and Steve Kosowski, national manager, product planning, gave an excellent presentation on Kia's resurgence highlighting the Optima Hybrid and the expansion of their West Point, GA plant. Thank you to Darryl Harrison at Zeno Group for reaching out to us. Also thank you to Shelby Hunt, Mike Ofiara, and Jay Joyer of the Zeno Group who were in attendance. Special thanks goes out to Ted Orme who has been outstanding as the head of our speakers bureau.

Our next Luncheon will be in July at the National Press Club. Susan M. Cischke, Group Vice President, Sustainability, Environment and Safety Engineering, Ford Motor Company will be the keynote speaker. Sue is an amazing person who gives you clear cut information in a concise and understandable delivery. You do not want to miss her presentation.

*Alvin Jones*

WAPA President



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