

Chevy Bolt gets top car award; Pacifica top utility vehicle (Update)

January 9 2017, by Jeff Karoub



General Motors Executive Chief Engineer Autonomous & Electrified Vehicles and New Technology Pam Fletcher, left, and Bolt Chief Engineer Josh Tavel stand next to a Chevy Bolt after being named top car in the North America at the North American International Auto show, Monday, Jan. 9, 2017, in Detroit. (AP Photo/Carlos Osorio)

The Chevy Bolt has been named top car in North America, an important milestone for a car General Motors hopes will finally get Americans

hooked on electric vehicles.

The Honda Ridgeline grabbed the honor for top truck. Utility vehicles were honored separately for the first time, with the Pacifica minivan from Fiat Chrysler snagging that award.

The honors were announced Monday morning at Detroit's Cobo Center as the North American International Auto Show's press preview days kicked into high gear.

The Bolt beat out the Genesis G90 and Volvo S90 for the car award. The electric car from Chevrolet went on sale late last year. It gets more than 200 miles per battery charge, which is more than the average American drives in a day. The Bolt also sells for around \$30,000 when a federal tax credit is included. Electric vehicles have failed to catch on with most American consumers, but General Motors hopes the improved range and price help shift opinions.

Mark Reuss, GM's head of global product development, described the Bolt as a "moon shot."

"We didn't have all the answers when we started the program—in terms of how far we were going to get range-wise, how light are we going to get the car and ... sell price," he said. "We hit on all cylinders on this, so to speak, even though there's not any in the car."



Fiat Chrysler representative Tim Kuniskis addresses the media after the Pacifica minivan from Fiat Chrysler won utility vehicle of the year at the North American International Auto show, Monday, Jan. 9, 2017, in Detroit. (AP Photo/Carlos Osorio)

The Ridgeline scored the truck award over Ford F-Series Super Duty and the Nissan Titan. Pacifica got the nod for the utility award over the Jaguar F-Pace and Mazda X-9.

Timothy Kuniskis, Fiat Chrysler's car chief, said he's "amazingly proud" that a minivan scored the utility honor. The award recognizes the automaker's commitment to the foundation it established for the family hauler while reinventing it some three decades later, he said.

"This is really all-new from the ground up," Kuniskis said of the Pacifica, a sleeker, swept-back minivan that hit showrooms last spring as a replacement for the Town and Country and Dodge Grand Caravan.

Among its firsts: hands-free sliding doors that open when the driver sticks a foot under them.

"We love minivans—we sold a quarter-million minivans this last year that just ended," he added. "Our designers just did an amazing job of taking something that has to be very functional and making it look very beautiful at the same time."



Fiat Chrysler representative Tim Kuniskis holds the award for utility vehicle of the year for the Pacifica minivan from Fiat Chrysler at the North American International Auto show, Monday, Jan. 9, 2017, in Detroit. (AP Photo/Carlos Osorio)

About 60 automotive journalists serve as judges for North American Car, Truck and Utility Vehicle of the Year awards. Eligible vehicles

must be new or substantially changed.

Organizers accept no advertising, though automakers try to capitalize on the marketing value of the awards, in their 24th year.

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