

General Motors gears up for hybrids

by UPI

DETROIT - General Motors Corp. Chief Executive Rick Wagner said he believes the company will increase its hybrid sales ten-fold, reaching 100,00 hybrid vehicles a year. GM's new line of hybrids, set to debut in 2010 and using smaller but more powerful batteries, focuses on making hybrids powerful and affordable, The Detroit News reported. Wagner made his projection at the Geneva Auto Show on Tuesday, the paper said. "In order to have a real impact ... advanced technologies must be affordable," Wagner said. GM's new hybrids will use lithium-ion batteries that deliver more power during acceleration and increase gas mileage by 1 to 2 miles per gallon, the company's hybrid power train chief engineer Steve Poulos told the paper. "We took the same (hybrid) system and put it on steroids," Poulos said. To compete with Toyota, which sold more than 180,000 hybrid Priuses last year, GM will offer hybrid power in a variety of models, including the hybrid Chevrolet Tahoe, which won Green Car Journal's Green Car of the Year in 2007. "They can say, 'We offer the most vehicles with hybrid options,'" an industry analyst said. "Competition-wise it certainly wouldn't hurt."

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