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Hydroformed Aluminum Frame Rails from Vari-Form Help GM Reduce Weight of the New-Generation 2014 Corvette Stingray

Troy, MI – Participation in the much-anticipated debut of the 2014 Chevrolet Corvette Stingray successfully extends the collaboration between Vari-Form and General Motors.

This summer, Vari-Form will begin production of all-aluminum hydroformed frame rails for the new-generation 2014 Corvette Stingray. This advanced technology yields greater design strength, torsional stiffness and vehicle durability. Corvette owners and enthusiasts will feel these improvements where they matter most – in body-hugging ride, racetrack-worthy handling, and cling-to-the-road performance. Fuel economy is another important deliverable, resulting from lower weight and reduced complexity made possible by patented Vari-Form Pressure-Sequence Hydroforming.

The integration of Vari-Form hydroformed frame rails in the new 2014 Corvette Stingray brings forward expertise successfully applied to the current model 2013 Corvette. The Vari-Form manufacturing facility in Strathroy, Ontario, Canada received the General Motors Supplier Quality Excellence Award in 2012 for consistent operational excellence related to the production of this component.

For 2014, the Corvette Stingray incorporates substantial structural changes, resulting in a 99-pound reduction in weight and a 57-percent increase in stiffness compared to the steel structure of the previous model.

Vari-Form Pressure-Sequence Hydroforming technology is a major factor in achieving these advances, which are critical to balancing the need for exceptional performance while addressing ever-stricter crash regulations. It was important for Vari-Form to develop an improved, dimensionally stable frame, starting with the frame rails. The backbone of the body structure is a new frame concept that features left and right hydroformed aluminum tube center sections, bridging the gap between two pairs of connecting nodes and front/rear crush zones. Hydroformed frame rails are optimized for light weight and superior strength, helping deliver classical Corvette handling and improved mileage for the driver.

“Our company is pleased to be part of the biggest model-over-model change to this American icon in decades,” said Vari-Form President Stephen Dow. “We tailor the hydroformed aluminum components with the gauge, form and strength needed to help GM realize significant weight advantages, optimal 50/50 front/rear weight balance, world-class power-to-weight ratio, and increased fuel efficiency. By pioneering new technologies and processes, Vari-Form contributes to the achievement of these important goals.”

About Vari-Form

Headquartered in Troy, Michigan, with production facilities in Strathroy, Ontario, Canada, Reynosa, Mexico, and Liberty, Missouri, Vari-Form originated the concept and application of hydroforming body, chassis and other automotive structural parts. Vari-Form’s technology is used to manufacture more than 7 million parts a year worldwide. The company began volume production using its patented, production-validated Pressure-Sequence Hydroforming (PSH) process in 1990. Vari-Form is the industry leader and has produced more than 100 million parts to date. For more information, go to www.vari-form.com.



Photo Caption

A plant team led by Steve Greer, Program Manager (center), assisted by Lorraine Colborne and Fred Denny, prepares model year 2013 aluminum hydroformed Corvette frame rails for shipment to the Bowling Green, Kentucky assembly plant. Changeover to the new 2014 Corvette Stingray frame rails has already begun at the Strathroy, Ontario, Canada, plant, with production scheduled to launch this summer.



Photo Caption

Backbone of the lightweight aluminum 2014 Corvette Stingray frame is a set of hydroformed aluminum tube center sections from Vari-Form (blue highlight), bridging the gap between two pairs of connecting nodes and front/rear crush-zones.

Vari-Form contact:

Terry E. Nardone

313.580.9075 Direct

248.879.5732

tnardone@vari-form.com

For interview requests or high-resolution image files, contact:

Jim Meloche

The Marketing Collaborative, LLC

248.376.4076

Jim@themarketingcollaborative.net