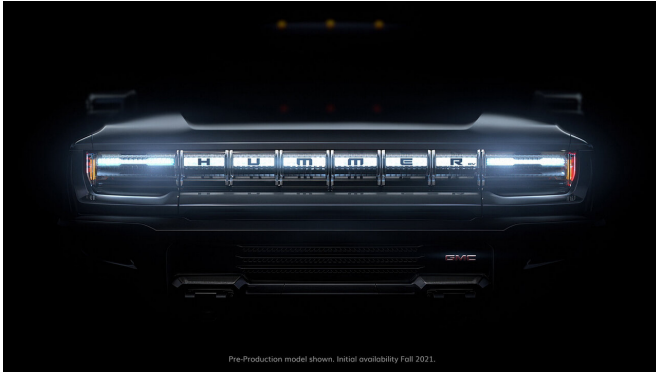


Hummer is making a comeback, but this time it's electric

30 January 2020, by Tom Krisher



This undated image provided by General Motors shows the grill on a battery-powered Hummer pickup truck. General Motors announced Thursday, Jan. 30, 2020, that it will start the pickup truck in September of 2021. (General Motors via AP)

The Hummer, once a gas-guzzling target for environmentalists, is making a comeback. But this time around it won't burn fuel or spew greenhouse gases.

General Motors announced Thursday that it will start selling a battery-powered Hummer pickup truck in September of 2021. At least part of the new Hummer will be shown in a 30-second television ad featuring basketball star LeBron James during the second quarter of Sunday's Super Bowl .

GM gave only a few details about the truck, which will be unveiled officially on May 20. It will have a huge battery to generate the equivalent of 1,000 horsepower, and will be able to go from zero to 60 mph (97 kilometers per hour) in three seconds. The Hummer also will produce 11,500 foot pounds of torque, a measure of rotational force that indicates a high towing capacity.

The truck will be sold under the GMC brand as the

Hummer EV. The new version will have similar design elements but will not look like the Hummer of the past, said GM spokeswoman Michelle Malcho.

GM wouldn't reveal the price or say how far the new truck can go on a single charge of its battery.

Although the electric Hummer truck is expected to be a large vehicle and its efficiency isn't yet known, it's still very likely it will pollute less than a comparable gas-powered truck, said David Reichmuth, a senior engineer with the Union of Concerned Scientists.

It's also good that GM is putting an electric vehicle in a more popular part of the U.S. auto market, he said. "Having electric vehicles in other segments besides smaller hatchbacks, that's a promising sign," he said.

Research shows that in most of the country—even areas more reliant on dirtier coal-fired power plants—electric cars still pollute less than similar gasoline vehicles, Reichmuth said. And that will continue to improve as the electric grid shifts more toward renewable energy from solar panels and windmills, he added.

Even though the truck is electric, GM likely will be able to attract former Hummer buyers if it delivers on promises of power and speed, said Sam Abuelsamid, an analyst for Navigant Research. At 1,000 horsepower, the new Hummer would be the most powerful production vehicle GM has ever made, he said.

"I don't know that the people who bought Hummers 15 years ago would necessarily be turned off by the fact that it's electric," he said. "What they wanted was the big kind of brutish look, at least the perception of go-anywhere capability even if they didn't go anywhere most of the time."

The market also could be expanded to affluent "personal use" truck buyers who want to go off the road and spend time in the outdoors, Abuelsamid said.

Abuelsamid said the new Hummer will compete directly with Tesla's upcoming "Cybertruck," a futuristic, heavily angled vehicle that will hit the market sometime next year with a starting price of \$39,900. A tri-motor, long-range version will have a base price of \$69,900.

To compete at the lower price, GM will have to offer a version of the Hummer pickup with a smaller battery and less than 1,000 horsepower.

Abuelsamid can see GM putting a starting price of \$45,000 on the Hummer and "going up to \$80,000, \$85,000 for the top-end model."

GM also will have to exceed 300 miles of range on a single charge to compete with Tesla and other manufacturers who plan to roll out electric pickups in the coming years, he said.

GM announced earlier in the week that the truck would be built at a factory in Detroit that was slated to close, but instead will be revamped to become GM's main producer of electric trucks, and even an autonomous electric shuttle.

The company said it would invest \$2.2 billion to retool the Detroit-Hamtramck plant, which will eventually will employ 2,200 workers.

GM scrapped the Hummer brand early in 2010 after the company emerged from bankruptcy protection.

The brand originated as the Humvee military vehicle built by AM General LLC in South Bend, Indiana. GM acquired rights to build civilian versions.

The Hummer attracted a devoted following among SUV lovers, who were drawn to the off-road ready vehicles. But the vehicles drew scorn from environmentalists and sales never recovered after gasoline prices spiked above \$4 a gallon in the summer of 2008.

The H3, the most fuel-efficient vehicle in Hummer's

lineup, averaged just 16 mpg. GM sold just over 9,000 Hummers in 2009, down two-thirds from 2,000 the year before.

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