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 APRIL 23, 2008  
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**VIDEO PODCAST**

Click [HERE](#) to view  
 this week's video  
 podcast:

**Dodge Viper**

*fuel economy*

**NEW PROPOSAL WILL HIKE U.S. CAFE RATES 26% BY 2015**

The U.S. Dept. of Transportation yesterday proposed to raise fuel economy standards to 35.7 mpg for cars and 28.6 mpg for light trucks—for an overall average of about 31.7 mpg—by 2015. This compares to current regulations of 27.5 mpg for cars and 22.5 mpg for trucks, or about 25 mpg combined.

A stepped phase-in period is due to start in 2011, when cars and trucks would have to average 31.2 mpg and 25 mpg, respectively. For cars, this would be increased to 32.8 mpg, 34 mpg and 34.8 mpg in the intervening years before hitting 35.7 mpg in 2015. Truck standards would be bumped to 26.4 mpg in 2012, then 27.8 mpg and 28.2 mpg in the following years.

The new rules would get the industry more than half way to the 35-mpg level for 2020 that was mandated in the energy bill passed by Congress in December. Under the plan, an automaker's fleet would have to become 4.6% more efficient per year. Reaching 35 mpg only requires a 4% annual improvement over today's levels.

Although details haven't been finalized, the new proposal is expected to set different requirements for different size vehicles—similar to the latest truck standards that are currently being phased in. This means CAFE levels will differ between automakers, depending on their vehicle mix.

Automakers also will be able to apply credits earned from exceeding passenger car fleet requirements to the light-truck fleet and carryover credits for five model years. In addition, automakers will be able to sell credits to competitors. Analysts estimate that it will cost the auto industry \$47 billion to meet the 2015 requirements. General Motors Corp. officials previously have predicted that meeting the 35 mpg for 2020 will add \$6,000 to the price of a vehicle.

The proposal was announced by DOT Chief Mary Peters during an Earth Day event at the agency's research center in McLean, Va., on Tuesday. Automakers pledge to meet the standard but are waiting to evaluate the details. Interested parties can submit comments on the proposal for six weeks. A final rule is expected by the end of the year.



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## Talk Back

Click [HERE](#) to respond to this week's reader question:

What should the government do about gasoline taxes?

## transmissions

### NISSAN TOPS 1 MILLION-PER-YEAR MARK WITH CVTs

Meeting a goal it set 16 months ago to sell 1 million vehicles worldwide with continuously variable transmissions, Nissan Motor Co. says it sold 1.09 million CVT-equipped models in the 2007 fiscal year that ended March 31. This compares with 250,000 of such vehicles in fiscal 2004. CVTs are fitted in nearly 29% of the company's new vehicles vs. just 7% in 2004.

Nissan introduced its first CVT vehicle in 1992 and adapted the technology for higher torque applications 10 years later in engines that displace up to 3.5 liters. Although other automakers have backed off CVTs in favor of six- and seven-speed automatics and dual-clutch designs, Nissan continues to tout benefits such as seamless acceleration and improved fuel economy vs. four-speed automatics.

The company sells the most CVT vehicles in North America and Japan. In these markets, CVTs are in more than two in five new Nissan cars and trucks.



Nissan sold more than 1 million CVT-equipped vehicles in its most recent fiscal year.

## engines

### POWER-TEC AIMS TO BE NEW KID ON THE ENGINE BLOCK

Cyltec LLC launched a new subsidiary earlier this year called Power-Tec Engineering that will focus on powertrain engineering services. The company says it benefits from high- and low-volume expertise from Cyltec and its JNB Machining unit, respectively, and provides near production-ready prototyping.

The key, according to Power-Tec, is to take a flexible design-for-manufacturing approach early in the development process. This results in fewer downstream changes and allows for more realistic prototype parts and processes—including replicating speeds, stresses and clamping of production machine tools—which Power-Tec says can save up to 20% in development time and cost during the validation/verification processes.

Initial projects include working with automakers and performance companies to opti-

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mize cylinder blocks, heads and induction systems for both power and fuel efficiency characteristics. In the future, it plans to develop its own cylinder heads and forced induction systems, teaming its design, engineering and prototyping capabilities with Cyltec's high-volume, precision machining. Power-Tec also is working with AHL-Tech to develop an ethanol-electric hybrid system for locomotives.

The company currently has 13 employees and expects to grow to 40 within a year. The group is led by President Lee Carducci and Vice President Devin Rickey. Both previously worked for McLaren Performance Technologies and have a combined 50-plus years of engine engineering and design experience.

Cyltec is a privately owned company based in Tecumseh, Mich. Established in 2001, it provides precision-machined and assembled powertrain components to the automotive and off-road industries. Customers include Caterpillar, Chrysler, Eaton and Ford.

## powertrain

### AUDI Q5 GETS DUAL-CLUTCH TRANSMISSION

The new Q5 crossover vehicle that Audi unveiled at this week's Beijing auto show will feature a dual-clutch seven-speed transmission. Parent company Volkswagen AG has offered such systems in select models for several years, but this is the first application for Audi. A six-speed manual also will be available in the Q5.

The five-seat Audi Q5 shares a platform with the brand's A5 coupe and A4 sedan. Audi says the new crossover's 110.5-inch wheelbase is the longest in its class and offers more legroom than competitive models. Styling cues resemble that of the larger Q7. The new crossover will compete against the BMW X3 and Mercedes GLK.



The Q5 has an updated version of Audi's Quattro all-wheel-drive system, adjustable air suspension and hill-descent control. Off-road bonafides include a 31° incline climbing capability, a 7.9-inch ground clearance and a fording depth of up to 19.69 inches. Other available features include DVD navigation, a rearview camera, steerable headlights, iPod interface and a three-zone automatic climate control.

Several engines—possibly including a 4.2-liter V-8—will be offered in world markets. The only powerplant offered in the U.S. will be a gasoline-direct-injection 3.2-liter V-6. The Q5 arrives in Europe this summer and in the U.S. and China early next year. Audi will build the vehicle at its Ingolstadt plant in Germany. Media reports say the model also will be built at a new plant in Changchun, China, starting next summer.

**The Q5 will offer Audi's first seven-speed transmission.**