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2014 Fiat 500L: Quality

- All-new Fiat 500L engineered and extensively tested in diverse climates, geographies of Europe and North America
- Fiat 500L test fleet accumulates approximately 7.5 million miles during validation
- Renovated assembly plant has more than 1,900 quality checks on the line and state-of-the-art Metrology Center for world-class fit and finish

June 27, 2013, Auburn Hills, Mich. - The Fiat 500L was conceived and developed in Italy, yet spent quality time proving itself on this side of the Atlantic to prepare for its North American debut.

"The Fiat 500L was extensively tested prior to its market launch in Europe, but we still conducted a full battery of durability and reliability testing in the United States because of the rough road conditions and variations in the North American climate," Doug Betts, Head of Quality for Fiat S.p.A. and Chrysler Group LLC, explained.

The global quality team constantly compares quality testing results from Italy and the United States. For example, suspension performance and durability get a lot of attention because the car needs to perform well in diverse geographic conditions. In Europe, the suspension components get a work out from all the lateral loads experienced on the twisty mountain roads common in many parts of Italy. For North American customers, the FIAT team has to safeguard against the long-term effects of rougher roads and numerous potholes.

In total, the Fiat 500L test fleet is accumulating approximately 7.5 million miles so the FIAT team can find and fix any issues that arise. This includes testing done in laboratories in Turin, Italy, and Auburn Hills, Mich., at FIAT and Chrysler Group proving grounds, as well as reliability testing on public roads in many different climates in Europe and the United States.

The 3/36 Reliability Testing, appropriately named as each test car accumulates 36,000 miles (equivalent to three years of use) in about three months, is conducted day and night by teams of drivers. To reflect typical daily driver scenarios, the test drivers do not originate from the engineering ranks and are intentionally chosen from diverse backgrounds to represent customers of different ages, sizes and ethnicities. The test drivers scrutinize all the customer functional aspects of each vehicle, as well as overall driving evaluations. This includes radio and navigation system checks, seat belt buckling, heating and ventilation operation and opening and closing storage compartments and windows.

The Fiat 500L development team meets every day and reviews any issues that surface during testing.

"It's a great benefit to the quality teams to compare notes from different testing locations," Betts explained.

"Ultimately, our customers benefit with a better performing, higher quality vehicle since we make improvements to all versions of the car based on how it performs in the harshest conditions of each market it's sold in."

The Fiat 500L is assembled at the Fiat Automobiles Serbia plant in Kragujevac, Serbia. The plant began building cars earlier this year following three years of intense work and a \$1.3 billion investment to essentially rebuild an automobile plant and install state-of-the-art manufacturing equipment and tools. Preparations also included more than one million hours of staff training to instill World Class Manufacturing principles, which involve all employees in the manufacturing process for continuous process and quality improvements.

Quality was a key consideration for the planning of each work station and operator, which includes more than 1,900 quality controls on the assembly line. Similar to investments at other Fiat and Chrysler Group plants launching all-new products, the Serbian plant houses a high-tech Metrology Center. The Metrology Center allows engineers and

technicians to find the sources of build variation – even when the components appear perfect to the naked eye – and resolve any fit and finish issues before customer vehicles are built.

“The Fiat 500L is an important launch as we continue to introduce a new generation of Fiat Automobiles to a broader range of North American customers,” Betts said. “Its versatility, craftsmanship and Italian style make a strong first impression, and we’ve engineered and thoroughly validated it to ensure it will create a lasting, positive impression from a quality standpoint.”

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