

NEWS



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Fast Tracks from The 2006 Washington Auto Show:

High-Tech Innovations Give New Meaning to 'Smart Cars'

WASHINGTON, D. C. – Today's transportation options don't yet include that awesome personal jet pack that Elroy Jetson had, yet one look at the vehicles on display at **The 2006 Washington Auto Show®** will convince consumers that automotive reality in the 21st century isn't too far from space-age fantasy just a generation ago. As they inspect the 700 vehicles on display from Jan. 24 – 29 at the Washington Convention Center, auto aficionados will find lots of high-tech that's way cool.

Whether it is on the auto show floor for this year or on the drawing board for the future, here's just a few of the innovations sure to intrigue and amaze:

- **Run-flat tires**, which can allow for 50 miles of travel with zero pressure.
- **A virtual advisor**, available on Cadillac models with the OnStar navigation system, that can provide three-day weather forecasts and traffic reports within pre-selected ranges of 5, 10 or 15 miles of the vehicle's location in most major markets, plus provide information on up to 10 selected stocks on the DJI and NASDAQ markets at the touch of a single button.
- **"Know it all" navigation systems** from Range Rover that automatically show fuel stations when the tank gets low and suggest nearby restaurants when told, "Navigation, I'm hungry." (The later might not be necessary in the Range Rover Sport and LR3. They have built-in cooler boxes.)
- **Keyless ignition**, the next evolution of keyless entry, to allow drivers to start their cars with the push of a button. . . from the warmth of the house.
- **Electronic media integration systems** that enable the driver to plug cell phones and other players into the car's stereo systems. The Hyundai Accent SR has three USB ports, while the Mercedes-Benz R-Class offers an iPod Integration Kit.
- **Three-way climate control**, also in the R-Class, enables both front seat passengers as well as those in the second row to manage comfort individually. (Even better than a dual-remote electric blanket.)

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Washington Auto Show High-Tech Innovations/ add one

- **Retractable hard tops**, like those on the Volkswagen Eos (available now in Europe), give owners the best of both convertible and hard-top worlds. The Eos will even alert the driver if there's not enough room for the roof to retract.

And possibly coming soon. . .

Toyota is working on upholstery treated with a substance that can cure rashes and a steering wheel that could help diabetics by allowing them to measure their blood sugar levels by simply gripping the wheel. Ideally, the wheel, in conjunction with other technology, would also be able to gauge a driver's temperament and blood pressure, adjusting the color of the headlights on the car to warn others of the driver's mental state. Company executives remind that it "will be a few more years before consumers see this technology in the market."

Major manufacturers including General Motors to BMW are working on cars that "can talk to each other," according to the Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers, ultimately sending signals to each other when another car is in close proximity to prevent collisions. *USA Today* reports that Honda is testing cars in Japan that include a camera view of nearby cars displayed on a dashboard-mounted screen, audio monitors that emit beeps when a collision is imminent, and sensory alerts like a vibrating brake pedal that signals drivers to break and applies torque on the steering wheel for steering assist. Honda also is experimenting with seats that could monitor a driver's pulse rate in an accident and relay the information via a transponder to rescuers.

The 2006 Washington Auto Show: "The State of The Auto" will bring more than 700 new cars, trucks, mini-vans and sport utility vehicles from over 37 domestic and import automakers to the Washington Convention Center from Jan. 24 – 29, 2006. For auto show operating hours, ticket information and "e-tickets," visit the Washington Auto Show online at www.washingtonautoshow.com or contact WANADA at 1-866-WASH-AUTO or 202.237.7200.

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