



PHOTO/HONDA

Sport utility vehicles like Honda's CR-V is undergoing a re-design that can give a more car-like ride.

U.S. automakers making push into growing crossover segment

By Ken Thomas
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

DETROIT - Dampened by high gas prices, the auto industry has faced tough times selling large sport utility vehicles lately. But with demand still high from families wanting plenty of space, carmakers may have an antidote: the crossover. Crossovers such as the Ford Escape and Honda CR-V, built on car platforms that give motorists

more of a car-like ride, are expected to outsell traditional SUVs in 2006 for the first time.

Automakers are touting several new designs of the models, called CUVs, at the North American International Auto Show. The Detroit showcase started media previews Sunday and opens to the public Saturday.

Dealerships are expected to have plenty to offer in the crossover market in 2006, with about 50 models

available, analysts said. That's up from 41 last year and just over a dozen in 2000.

"It's the sedan of the next decade," said Michael Robinet, an auto analyst with CSM Worldwide.

Ford Motor Co. unveiled the 2007 Edge on Sunday, offering a vehicle it said would "shake up" the crossover market. The Edge boasts performance with a 250-horsepower V-6 engine and is expected to attract

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Overseas lotteries scam more Americans

By Zenitha Prince
AFRO NEWSPAPERS

BALTIMORE - Myrtle Scott received the check and the lottery award letter in the mail a couple weeks before Christmas. It seemed an answer from heaven at the time.

"When I got the check, I was excited. That was my first impression," Scott, 51, said. "You see a check like that just before Christmas, and you can't help but to be excited."

Meanwhile, in Warrior, Ala., Alice Tumblin received a call from her local bank saying they had intercepted three sizable checks written on the account of the Tumblin's construction firm's account, just as Scott's check was. Tumblin said the checks would have wiped out the account.

"The first three checks alone would have put us out of business. It would have taken all the money from out of our account," she said of the small family-owned outfit that boasts a mere eight employees.

Both Tumblin and Scott are victims of a new-and-improved mail fraud gimmick: the foreign lottery scam. Notifications of sizable award winnings in foreign countries like Canada, Australia and the Netherlands are sent to unsuspecting people, who are also asked to send money to claim the prize, supposedly for taxes, insurance, processing and the like.

"I think it's probably an old scam using new technology," said Maryland Attorney General J. Joseph Curran Jr. "Before, they would try to scam you on the street; now they're using the telephone, e-mail and mail."

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Only in America: promoter's rival joins boxing game

By Larry Neumeister
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK - A lawyer who has sued Don King several times - and cost him millions of dollars - has gone to work for the boxing promoter.

The lawyer, Judd Burstein, once vilified King as a cancer on the sport but has now come to praise him as "extremely honorable."

As for King, he's also come around. He once called Burstein an "insidious insect" but now describes him as tenacious, hardworking and energetic.

"I respect his talent," King said. "He's on our side now."

Burstein had a string of successes against King in seven cases he brought between 1997 and 2004, including a \$7.5 million settlement from him on behalf of boxer Terry Norris.

The 52-year-old Burstein said he called reporters afterward and told them: "Don King was a cancer on the sport and the settlement was a dose of chemotherapy."

King once sued the lawyer for defamation in England after Burstein claimed King was anti-Semitic. The case was settled.

"He and I had always had this weird love-hate relationship," Burstein said. "He had a lot of respect for me because I won cases against him."

Burstein said his change of heart came after he represented IBF boxing champion Chris Byrd in a lawsuit against King in 2004. Byrd said King

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PHOTO/DWIGHT CARTER

Earl Graves Jr. (left) has been named chief executive at Black Enterprise magazine, succeeding his father, Earl Graves Sr. The senior Graves, who founded Black Enterprise in 1970, will remain chairman and publisher.

Passing the torch at BE

Magazine publisher Earl Graves names son chief executive

By Herbert L. White
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The nation's leading black business publication has a new chief executive.

Earl G. Graves Sr., founder of Black Enterprise magazine, named his son Earl "Butch" Graves Jr. chief executive officer and president. The senior Graves, who founded Black Enterprise in 1970, will remain chairman and publisher.

"Those who advance at Earl G. Graves

Ltd. - whether family or not - must earn their positions," said Earl Graves Sr. "Over the past 17 years Butch has excelled despite the challenges of an ultracompetitive and rapidly changing publishing industry. In 1988 BE had revenues of approximately 20 million. In 2006 we project that those revenues will exceed 60 million. As we have expanded our company, Butch's business acumen and instincts have helped triple our revenue."

The junior Graves will continue to lead

the strategic positioning of the corporation, guide its overall profitability, and act as the top editorial decision maker.

"I am excited about the opportunity to succeed my father as CEO of Black Enterprise," Butch Graves said. "My mission is to build upon the success of what he established, while finding new media outlets that will grow our business and demonstrate all things possible to our core audience."

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Banking Commission shuts down payday lenders

By Afriqui I. Kilimanjaro
CAROLINA PEACEMAKER

GREENSBORO - North Carolina residents received an early Christmas present from State Commissioner of Banks Joseph Smith.

Smith ruled that since 2001, payday lender Advance America operated illegally in North Carolina by establishing a partnership with an out-of-state bank and undermining state laws.

State Attorney General Roy Cooper successfully argued that Advance America violated North Carolina usury laws by providing loans at interest rates in excess of 400 percent. Cooper also proved that Advance America evaded state consumer protection laws by operating under the charters of out-of-state Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation banks.

North Carolina is the first

state in the nation to authorize payday lending and then act to make it an illegal industry. In 1997, the N.C. General Assembly granted payday lenders a special interest law that allowed the industry to charge interest rates well above North Carolina's usury rate of 36 percent. The General Assembly allowed the payday special interest law to sunset in 2001, making the practice of payday lending

illegal under state law. Since the special interest law's expiration, payday lenders have entered into affiliations with out-of-state banks in an effort to evade North Carolina law.

The ruling against Advance America also affects the four other payday lending companies operating in North Carolina. They are Check into Cash, Check 'N Go, First American, and CompuCredit.

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