

## Ford Team Designing New Generation Pony

Kenneth Dabrowski, program manager for international and small car programs for Ford Motor Company, has acknowledged that a team of young, enthusiastic engineers are currently developing the 1995 Mustang in a top-secret experimental project outside Ford's Engineering Center.

And Dabrowski also revealed that the new Mustang will be a rear-wheel-drive vehicle.

Dabrowski said the Mustang project is Ford's first experiment with the dedicated team approach. The 200 engineers -- many in their 20s and 30s -- have been isolated in a separate building secured by coded entry doors and removed from Ford's other engineering buildings.

The company says the only constraints placed on the engineering team in its development of the new Mustang are mandates to comply with government regulations and to meet cost targets.

Dabrowski won't say when the next-generation Mustang will be introduced, but *Automotive News* reported in its February 4 edition that product planning documents show that the car will be available in the 1995 model year.

Sources also told *Automotive News* that Ford will use an improved version of Mustang's present platform, known internally as the Fox platform, as the basis for the new Pony.

The Mustang engineering team, smaller than most vehicle development teams, was formed around six hand-picked engineers who are sportscar enthusiasts or Mustang owners.

Ford says the purpose of the program is to reduce time required to plan a new car as well as to determine how a relatively small, self-contained group of engineers operates in achieving its goal.

The Mustang development team meets with Dabrowski once a week, and he says he is impressed with the group's progress.

"There's a tremendous amount of enthusiasm on the team," he says.

The Ford executive says the Mustang team is "more systems oriented than components oriented."

All prototyping "will be done at the team's work site instead of at the individual component departments. The team has its own prototypers and clay modelers."

Dabrowski says Ford is hoping to complete the Mustang development project at about 45 percent below costs for a program in which a car is developed by different groups of engineers in different locations. He says such a development program costs at least \$1 billion.

"The 45 percent is a goal and could be achieved if everything went perfectly." He acknowledges that there are always unexpected developments in the course of designing a car.

"We'd like to get at least 20 percent cost efficiency (cost reduction) from the program," he says.

Information that Ford is developing its next-generation Mustang comes as good news to Mustang enthusiasts, many of whom feared that the popular car would be phased out or converted to a front-wheel drive model as early as the 1992 model year. Assuming that the next-generation Mustang is ready for introduction by the 1995 model year, it would go on the market just before the celebration of the 30th anniversary of the introduction of the original Mustang on April 17, 1964.

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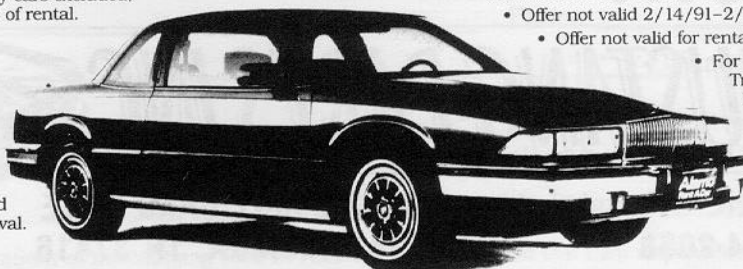
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