Infotainment Trends Highlight Moscow Auto Show

Reflecting the strong growth potential of the Russian automotive market, the Moscow International Auto Show (MIAS) flaunted its new-found prominence with this year's event featuring a wealth of new vehicles that integrate infotainment features.

"The emerging Russian automotive market holds vast potential for both foreign and domestic OEMs," said Dmytro Koshevy, researcher for global automotive and LBS at iSuppli Corp. "During the first seven months of 2010, new-car sales in the nation grew by 7 percent and light commercial vehicles rose by 48 percent. That's impressive growth for an industry struggling to recover after a crippling downturn." At the MIAS, held from Aug. 27 through Sept. 5, a number of new models were introduced that came packed with infotainment features, such as the 7-inch headunit displays found in the 2011 Infiniti QX56, the 2011 Toyota Highlander and the new Ford Mondeo. Furthermore, OEMs are offering Hard Disk Drive (HDD) navigation systems with full Russian-language support to complement the headunit displays.

Also introduced during the show were premium audio systems such as Mark Levinson's 5.1-channel 14-speaker set, available in the new Lexus ES 350, as well as Bose sound in Renault's Latitude sedan and in the 2011 Infiniti QX56.

Domestic auto OEM AvtoVAZ holds nearly 25 percent of the Russian automotive market, but most of its cars are basic vehicles with very little technology, automotive market research from iSuppli indicates. However, at MIAS, AvtoVAZ premiered pre-production versions of the Kalina and Priora equipped with the GLONASS/GPS navigation system.

AvtoVAZ will be the first domestic OEM to offer built-in navigation in Russia, as well as the first car maker in the world to offer dual GLONASS/GPS navigation. Set for commence production in the first quarter of 2011, the built-in navigation systems will be optional for 11,000 rubles - or $360 - which is about one-tenth the price of foreign GPS systems.

Prior to this development, built-in GLONASS navigation systems were used for corporate fleet monitoring and emergency services. As iSuppli reported earlier, Prime Minister Vladimir Putin proposed equipping all domestically produced vehicles with ERA-GLONASS, a system with automatic crash notification and SOS call features. It's assumed the service will be free of charge to all drivers that equip their vehicles with GLONASS navigation.

With no evidence that the Russian automotive market is slowing down, MIAS sent a clear message to the rest of the world that the best times for the Russian automotive industry may well lie ahead.

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