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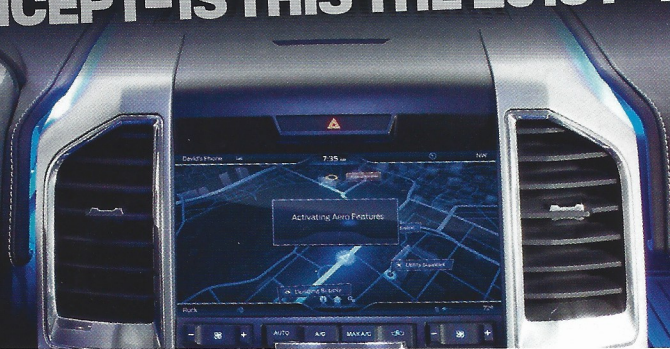
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Best in Class Our Picks for 2013

GMC'S CENTENNIAL PART II

In Part I of this story (January/February 2013), we covered the origins of GMC through 1956. Part II picks up the story from there.—Ed.



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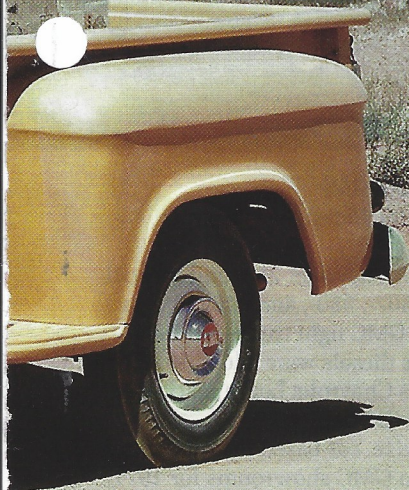
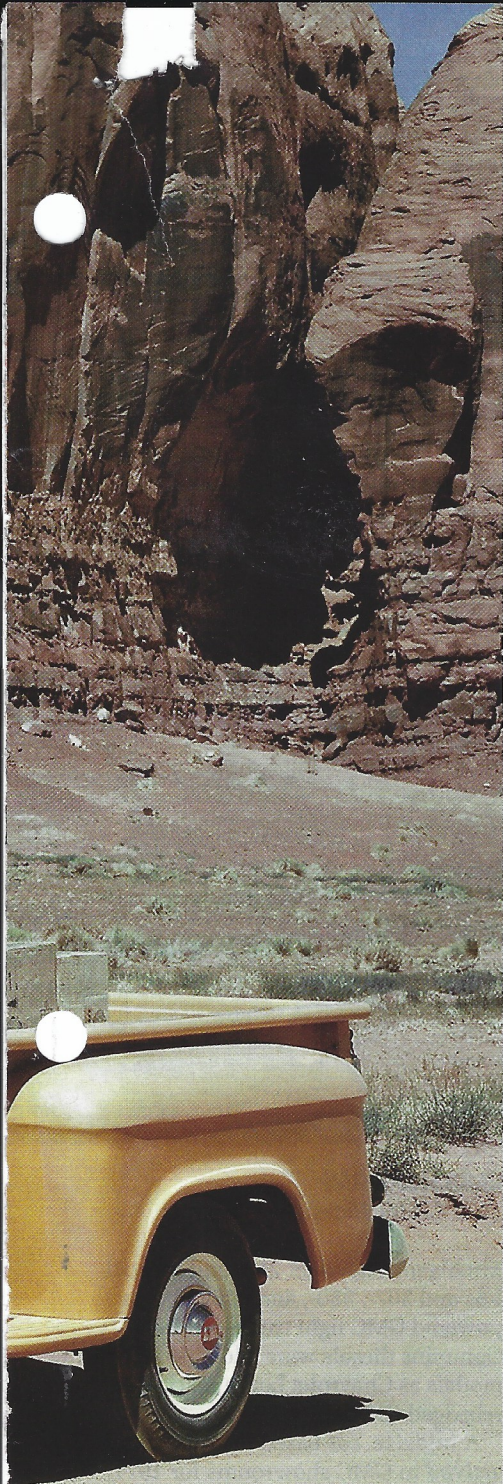
A look at GM's truck-making arm, from 1957 to today

By Gary Witzenburg

In 1957, GMC's light trucks got a mild restyle and larger, more powerful V-8 engines, and some became the company's first factory 4x4 light trucks. Meanwhile, GM's Detroit Diesel division launched a new Super E turbodiesel engine series, with four valves per cylinder for more power



and fuel efficiency, according to historian and former GMC engineer Donald Meyer. In the next year, light- and medium-duty models got quad headlamps—a first for trucks—and a new Allison Torqmatic six-speed automatic became available for medium-duty models.



NEW STYLE In 1957, the trucks got a new grille (above) and dual headlights in 1958 (left). Below is a design proposal from 1958.



BRINGING HOME THE BACON
A 1957 Series 37G cab chassis.



FLOWER POWER
This 1960 Model 1000 Wideside's looks are a departure from trucks of the previous decade.

Modernization and Regulation

Most models were totally restyled for 1960 with cabs designed by Chevrolet; smoother-riding independent front suspensions with torsion-bar springs (instead of I-beams and leaf springs) on 4x2 light- and medium-duty models; an all-new family of GMC 60-degree (150-205-hp) V-6 gas engines; and a 275-hp, 702-cid V-12 that replaced the old GMC I-6s and passenger car V-8s. The next year brought a more powerful 165-hp, 305-cid gas V-6 and a new 290-hp diesel, while a mild front restyle, a new instrument panel, and available up-level trim arrived for 1962.

For 1963, coil springs replaced the torsion bars in IFS 4x2 light-duty models, while medium-duties returned to front I-beams with leaf springs. Rear suspensions on 4x2 light trucks also reverted to leaf springs, but 4x4s retained coils front and rear. Chevrolet I-6 engines became standard on 1000, 1500, and 2500 models, P1000 deliveries got a 90-hp, 154-cid (Chevrolet) I-4, and Chevrolet two-speed Pow-R-Flow automatics replaced Hydra-Matic four-

speeds after the Hydra-Matic manufacturing plant burned down.

As the U.S. became involved in a war in Vietnam in 1964, a G1000 Handi-Van light commercial van, powered by the standard 154-cid L-4 or optional 120-hp, 194-cid I-6, was introduced, and a Handi-Bus passenger version was added for 1965. The next year brought more powerful 250-cid (Chevrolet) I-6 and optional GMC 351-cid V-6 engines, plus a new optional Hydra-Matic three-speed automatic.

For 1967—a year ahead of federal safety regulations—restyled 1500, 2500, and 3500 C/K models offered energy-absorbing steering columns

HANDY TOOL GMC also built vans, such as this 1964 G1000 Handi-Van.





WIDE ARRAY (Left) 1961 COE truck tractor. (Right) 1969 conventional tandem dump truck. (Bottom left) 1971 GMC Sprint pickup.



and instrument panels, a dual-brake system, and standard seatbelts. GMC started building light trucks alongside their Chevrolet counterparts in the same plants, and in 1968, GMC, now third in U.S. truck sales, took over design and manufacture of all Chevy medium- and heavy-duty trucks. Available engines were 230-, 250- and 292-cid Chevy I-6s and 307-, 327-, and

396-cid V-8s rated from 140 to 310 hp. New medium- and heavy-duty models were introduced for 1969.

The K15 Jimmy sport/utility arrived for 1970, and new, larger, more powerful Vandura and Rallywagon G vans replaced the Handi-Van and Handibus as GMC began construction of a new medium-duty truck assembly plant on Opdyke Road in Pontiac,

Michigan. Chevrolet 250- and 292-cid I-6s and 307-, 350-, and 396-cid V-8s powered GMC light trucks, while Cummins diesels were added to HD models as Chevrolet began marketing rebadged GMC HD trucks.

CLASSICAL GAS
1972 C2500 Wideside pickup.

A midsize, car-based Sprint pickup arrived in GMC showrooms for 1971, and front disc brakes replaced drums on most light trucks. The same year, power and torque ratings changed from gross to SAE net.

In 1972, medium-duty production moved to the new Opdyke Road plant, and new Allison four- and five-speed automatic transmissions became available in medium-duty and 7500-series trucks. The following year brought all-new light-duty models (with Chevrolet bodies) offering four trim levels in larger interiors, and five emissions-controlled Chevrolet engines ranging from a 250-cid I-6 to a 454 big-block V-8.

MEET JIMMY
The utility vehicle, introduced for 1970, came with a removable top and 2WD and 4WD.





THAT '70S SHOW
 (Above) GMC's 1976 motorhome. (Below) The light-duty truck line from 1978.



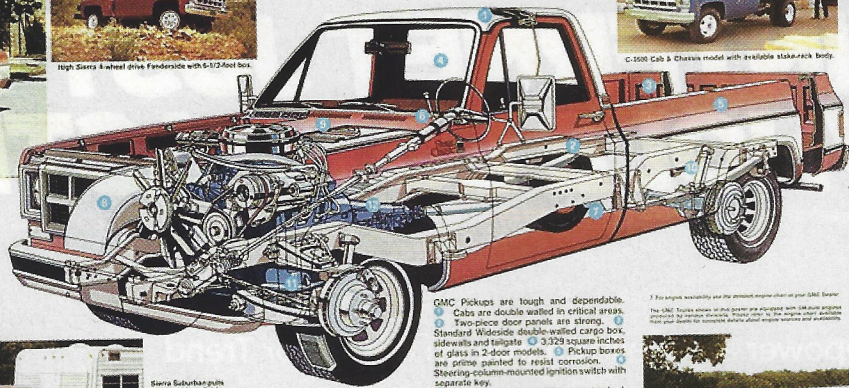
Sierra Classic 1500 Series Wideside Pickup with 5.7 Liter Diesel.



Available Street Coach Exterior Trim Package for 4.7L and 5.7L Wideside and Fenderless models.



High Sierra 4-wheel drive Fenderless with 6-1/2-foot box.



GMC Pickups are tough and dependable.

- ⓐ Cabs are double-walled in critical areas.
- ⓑ Two-piece door panels are strong.
- ⓒ Standard Wideside double-walled cargo box, sidewalls and tailgate.
- ⓓ 3,329 square inches of glass in 2-door models.
- ⓔ Pickup boxes are prime painted to resist corrosion.
- ⓕ Steering-column-mounted ignition switch with separate key.
- ⓖ Salisbury-type rear axles are standard.
- ⓗ Limited slip differentials are available.
- ⓓ Front fenders are of double-wall construction.
- ⓙ Double-walled hood.
- ⓚ Staggered rear shock absorbers.
- ⓛ Independent front suspension with big coil springs on 2-wheel drive models.
- ⓜ Three-speed manual transmission with column-mounted controls is standard on most 1500 and 2500 Series models.



C-3500 Cab & Chassis model with available stake-bed body.



Two-cylinder gasoline engine models are available.



Four-cylinder and V8 diesel engine models are available, depending on truck model.



C-3500 Series Sierra Classic 3-Crew Cab model seats six.

For engine availability see the nearest engine chart on page 128. See the 1978 Truck and Bus section for more information on the new engine chart. For more information on the engine chart, contact your nearest GMC dealer or write to GMC Truck and Bus, P.O. Box 1000, Flint, Michigan 48906.



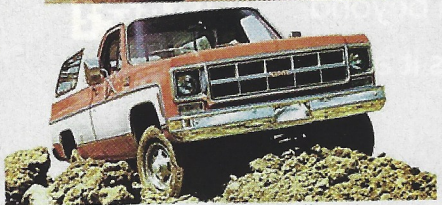
Sierra is available in either 2- or 4-wheel drive models. Great for off-highway travel.



Caballero Diablo, our answer to the fine, looks and rides like a car... has 200-hp. payback.



Sierra Suburban pulls trailers with available trailer towing equipment.



Four-wheel drive is available in practically all models.



Rally STX has a new look for '78. Seats up to 12 with available seating.



Gypsy lets you ditch off the interior your way. Gypsies, not shown, is very special. Ask for details.



Vandura has a new front end and dash appearance. Ask for details.

1978 GMC LIGHT DUTY TRUCKS

Fuel Shortages and More Regulation

All GMC-built gas and diesel engines were discontinued at the end of the 1973 model run, the former replaced by Chevy gas engines in medium-duty models, while no diesels were offered for 1974. Light-truck sales were hurt by the 1973-1974 oil embargo and the resulting fuel shortage as catalytic converters were required to meet emissions standards on 1975 trucks rated up to 6000-pound GVWR.

In 1976, GMC began using Caterpillar diesels in medium-duty trucks. In 1978, a new car-based Caballero pickup replaced the Sprint; GMC's futuristic front-drive motorhome was discontinued after six years and 12,921 units; and C1500 pickups became available with an Oldsmobile 350-cid V-8 diesel—an unfortunate gas-engine conversion that was rough-running, underpowered, and ultimately unreliable.

Worldwide Truck and Bus

In 1980, full-size pickups and SUVs were mildly restyled, and a new series of raised-height, medium-duty TopKick trucks was added for 1981. Mid-year, the GM Truck and Bus Group was formed with worldwide responsibility for design, manufacture, sales, and service of all GM trucks and buses. In addition to GM Truck and Bus Vehicle Opera-

tions, it included Detroit Diesel Allison Division and GM's Bedford Commercial Vehicle Division in the U.K.

In 1982, GMC Truck and Coach, Chevrolet, and GM Assembly Division were merged into Truck and Bus Operations, and Chevrolet Truck Engineering was absorbed into GMC Engineering. A compact S-15 pickup was launched with four engine choices:



SIERRA CLASSIC 1982
 C-1500 Wideside had chrome bumpers, unlike the regular Sierra.



GET IN LINE Here's GMC's truck, van, and SUV lineup for 1991. It includes the Sonoma, Rally, and Suburban.

A 150-hp 4.3-liter V-6 became standard in S-15 Jimmys and Safaris, with a 170-hp version optional; a new five-speed manual replaced the old four-speed in S-15s; and EFI improved performance and fuel efficiency of the 6.0- and 7.0-liter V-8s used in TopKicks. For 1991, the compact pickup (called Sonoma) was redesigned to look more like the Sierra; a limited-production high-performance Sonoma Cyclone model was offered with a 280-hp turbocharged 4.3-liter V-6; a longer-wheelbase four-door Jimmy was added; and a new heavy-duty Hydra-Matic four-speed replaced the old three-speed automatic in HD light trucks.

a 1.9-liter Isuzu four, a 2.5-liter Pontiac I-4, a Chevy 2.8-liter V-6, and a 2.2-liter Isuzu diesel I-4, and Chevrolet-built 6.2-liter diesel V-8s became available in full-size light trucks. Truck sales began to recover as 87 percent of GMC's light trucks were purchased for personal use.

The next year brought an S-15 compact utility with available Insta-Trac shift-on-the-fly 4WD. For 1984, a new Isuzu-built Forward series of medium-duty tilt-cab trucks powered by a 165-hp I-6 turbodiesel was introduced. A midsize Safari van was added in cargo and passenger versions for 1985 as GMC light-truck sales set a record.

In 1986, Volvo GM Heavy Truck Corp. was formed as a joint venture between GM and Sweden's Volvo. That November, Truck & Bus announced it would close three U.S. plants and begin phasing out bus and Class 8 heavy-duty truck production. The next year, GMC Truck and Coach Operations was renamed the GMC Truck Division (of GM's Truck and Bus Group). Detroit Diesel Allison's engine operations were sold to Roger Penske to become the Detroit Diesel Engine Corp.; production of Class 8 tractors was dropped; and C/K pickups and SUVs were redesigned R/V models.

GMT400

For 1988, an all-new range of Sierra full-size pickups on a new GMT400 architecture arrived with nicer interiors, ABS, Insta-Trac shift-on-the-fly 4WD, and improved ride, handling, and fuel efficiency. The car-based Caballero pickup was dropped, as was GMC's last remaining heavy truck, the Brigadier.

For 1990, extended and AWD versions of the Safari van were offered, and an extended G3500 one-ton van.

All-new GMT400 Suburban and Yukon SUVs arrived for 1992, the latter replacing the full-size Jimmy,

THE 'BURBS Redesigned for '92, the Suburban had styling cues from the Sierra pickups.



and a 280-hp Typhoon version of the compact Jimmy joined its high-performance Syclone pickup cousin. In 1993, a new GM North American Truck Platforms organization took over production of medium-duty truck, school bus, and motorhome chassis, and the safety of all GM vans was improved thanks to standard four-wheel anti-lock brakes. In 1994, GM's 6.5-liter V-8 diesel family grew to include a 155-hp naturally aspirated version to replace the less powerful 6.2-liter V-8.

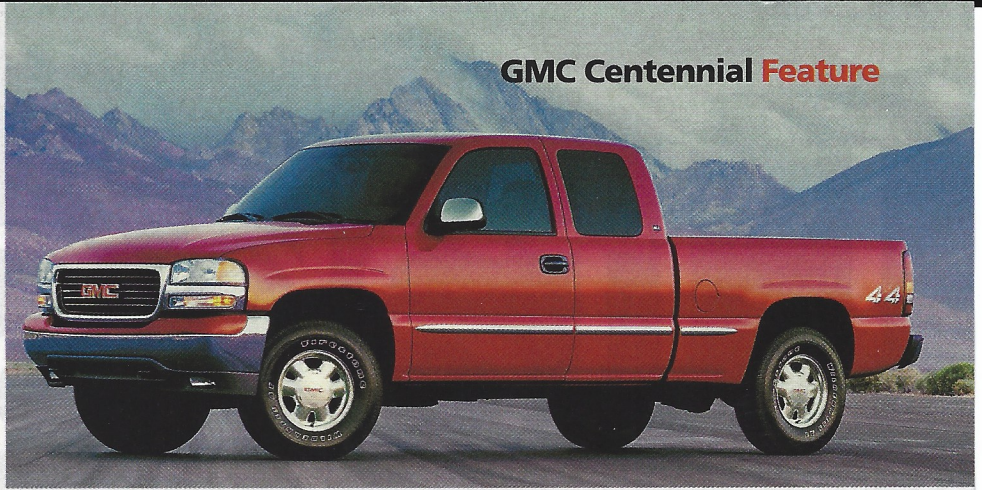
In 1995, the Volvo/GM joint venture WHITEGMC nameplate was discontinued, marking a temporary end to GMC-branded heavy trucks, as light-truck production struggled to keep up with demand. A new compact Jimmy was introduced, along with a longer-wheel-base four-door Yukon, and a third door became available on extended-cab Sierra pickups.

Merger and move

In 1996, a merger created Pontiac-GMC Division, and a new family of Vortec gas engines (4.3-liter V-6, 5.0-liter V-8, 5.7-liter V-8, and 7.4-liter V-8, rated at 200-290 hp) with sequential EFI improved light-truck power and fuel economy. Pontiac-GMC headquarters moved to GM's Detroit Renaissance Center the following year; Volvo bought GM's remaining interest in Volvo GM Heavy Truck Corp.; and commercial truck production was consolidated into the Flint plant. An all-new series of Savana full-size G vans replaced the old Rally/Vandura models; an upgraded C series of conventional-cab medium-duty models replaced the TopKicks; and bi-fuel (gasoline/CNG) Sierra 3500 pickups became available.

GMC's next-gen (GMT800) Sierra arrived in 1999 with all-new bodies and chassis and significant improvements throughout. A passenger-side third door became standard on extended cabs; tow/haul mode was added to automatic transmissions; and upgraded Vortec V-8s ranged from a 255-hp, 4.8-liter through a 270-hp, 5.3-liter to a 300-hp, 6.0-liter. All-new GMT800 Yukon and Yukon XL (formerly Suburban) SUVs followed for 2000, as did an upscale Envoy version of the compact Jimmy SUV. New 7.8-liter I-6 Duramax diesel engines became available in T-Series trucks.

New GMT800 2500 and 3500 HD models arrived for 2001 with standard, extended, and four-door crew cabs,



GMT800 1999 marked the start of the GMT800 era, with this Sierra 1500 SLT (above) and continued with the 2000 Yukon (left).

and new 340-hp, 8.1-liter Vortec gas and 300-hp, 6.6-liter Duramax turbodiesel engines with new six-speed manual (ZF) and five-speed automatic (Allison) transmissions. Luxury Denali versions of the Yukon and Yukon XL were added, while compact Sonoma pickups offered three-door extended and four-door crew cabs.

An all-new midsize Envoy SUV was launched in 2002 with a new DOHC, 24-valve, 270-hp I-6. Also new were a luxury Sierra Denali pickup, QuadraSteer four-wheel steering (effective but too expensive), and W-Series medium-duty tilt-cab models. The next year brought new conventional-cab TopKicks. A range of Canyon midsize pickups, powered by a standard

175-hp, 2.8-liter I-4 or optional 220-hp, 3.5-liter five-cylinder versions of the Envoy's DOHC I-6, was launched for 2004, along with an Envoy XUV model with a power-sliding rear roof section to accommodate tall loads. The XUV was cancelled in 2005. The 2006 Sierra 3500 pickup came with a new Allison six-speed automatic.

The big news for 2007 was another all-new line of Sierra light-duty pickups and Yukon SUVs on a vastly improved GMT900 architecture. The Yukon's upscale interior graced topline models; most available engines offered more power; and the slow-selling, five-speed manual gearbox was dropped. Hugely important that year was the Acadia, a three-row crossover that would eventually replace the aging Envoy.

For 2008, GMC launched Active Fuel Management, GM's cylinder deactivation system that smoothly shut down half of a (5.3- or 6.0-liter) V-8's cylinders to save fuel under light loads. There was also GM's two-mode gas/electric hybrid system, available on the Yukon Hybrid. Also new was the 403-hp 6.2-liter V-8, the most powerful in the half-ton class, available in topline Sierras and Yukon Denalis.

When the U.S. economy collapsed in late 2008, the resulting sales meltdown led to a 2009 government-guided GM bankruptcy that forced cancellation of four of its eight U.S. brands and closings of thousands of dealerships. But the company has returned to profitability with excellent new products, including strong-selling pickups, SUVs, and crossovers from GMC. With state-of-the-art next-generation Sierras on the horizon for 2014, things are looking good again for GMC. **TT**



CROSSING OVER GMC went from body-on-frame Envoy (above) to its unibody replacement, the Acadia (below).



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