

# 2008 Ford Focus



COURTESY OF FORD MOTORS

By **DURHL CAUSSEY**  
Special to *The Epoch Times*

Today gas was selling for \$3 a gallon at my neighborhood gas station, and I just read in the daily newspaper that oil was selling for \$100 a barrel. Well, for the last week I have been driving the Ford Focus. I have driven it hard all week in the city, getting over 30 miles to the gallon. The official EPA fuel economy is 24 mpg city/35 hwy.

The Focus comes in both two- and four-door and three trim styles. I drove the SES 2-door coup 5-passenger 2.0L DOHC engine with an automatic transmission. Admittedly the Focus SES is the luxury trim with an interior wrapped in medium stone leather seats, traction control, Sirius radio, and ambient interior light that even surrounds your cup holders in a beautiful subdued green lighting. Gauges and controls come alive in a cool ice blue light.

The most impressive feature was the voice-activated communication and entertainment system. The Bluetooth voice-activated, hands-free phone calling on my Ford Focus SES allowed me to link to my mobile phone and my media player.

When you enter Ford Focus with a compatible and paired Bluetooth-enabled mobile phone, SYNC automatically recognizes its presence. Then you just press a button and use simple voice commands to make cell calls, take calls, and more—with both hands on the wheel.

This particular package, with a message center, climate control, Sirius radio, 24-hour road assistance, and the personal safety system, can be purchased for less than \$19,000. The standard price with only the basic accessories sells for less than \$15,000.

Select the package that's the most affordable for you. Regardless of the type of Focus you choose, you will get great mileage.

The 16-inch alloy wheels, power dual mirrors, and 2-bar chromed grille with complimentary fog lamps make the Focus sporty-attractive. The 3yr./36,000 mile warranty coupled with a 5 yr./60,000 powertrain tells me that the folks at Ford believe the Focus is dependable for the long haul and distance, and they are willing to guarantee that belief.

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# Diesel Gets Unexpected Boost at Detroit Auto Show

DETROIT (Reuters)—A fresh mandate from Washington for automakers to sharply increase fuel efficiency has given an unexpected boost to a historically unpopular alternative in the United States—diesel.

The fanfare at the North American International Auto Show includes gasoline-electric "hybrids" to futuristic technologies like fuel cells, all geared to fight soaring pump prices and conquer what President Bush has termed America's "addiction" to oil.

But diesel was also making a new pitch as a here-and-now option to make engines run more economically and pollute less.

Diesel, a conventional combustion approach long favored by Europeans, has been perennially stalled in the United States because of unacceptably high tailpipe emissions.

An oil-based product, diesel is widely available in Europe where gasoline is more expensive. But only a fraction of consumer vehicles outside of some luxury models, pickups, and big trucks, use it

on American roads.

"American consumers still have a negative impression of diesel," Takeo Fukui, chief executive of Honda Motor Co., told reporters at the show on Jan. 13.

But Fukui also said Honda's new line of "clean diesel" cars due to roll out in the U.S. in 2009 would make money from day one. The new system will clear the same emissions regulations as gasoline in the United States, Fukui said.

Advanced technology has spawned a cleaner-burning diesel fuel and Honda and other foreign automakers are using the Detroit show to broaden its appeal for the U.S. market.

The backdrop of a new U.S. law requiring a 40 percent jump in fuel efficiency by 2020 and tougher diesel emissions regulations coming on line at the end of the decade are driving executives to rethink and improve diesel technology.

Cleaner diesel filters out more pollutants and for the first time meets smog pollution laws in all states, according to the Union of Concerned Scientists. Clean diesel

also delivers power and gets better mileage than gasoline. But the technology costs more to produce than gasoline engines.

"It is a major step forward in fuel saving and we are going across the board to promote technology," said Dieter Zetsche, chief executive of Daimler AG and Mercedes.

"Modern diesel engines provide tremendous torque and a very smooth run and a boost of 20 to 30 percent in fuel efficiency. Those are very strong arguments for this technology," he said.

Thomas Weber, the head of research and product development at Mercedes and Daimler, said: "Diesel has become accepted."

Automakers are expanding their diesel products globally.

"There is a trend toward diesel in emerging markets," said Phil Popham, managing director of Britain's Land Rover, a unit of Ford Motor Co.

Ford is hoping for an efficiency bounce with its turbocharged "Eco-boost" gasoline engine, whose fuel injection technology is borrowed from the diesel concept.

BMW AG is introducing two diesel sedans for the U.S. market beginning next fall. Mercedes has offered clean diesel vehicles in the U.S. market, and Audi and Volkswagen have fuller diesel plans. Land Rover introduced a concept SUV that runs on clean diesel.

One of the top developments at the show came when Toyota Motor Corp. President Katsuaki Watanabe said the Japanese automaker will launch a diesel-powered Tundra pickup truck and Sequoia SUV in the United States soon—an about-face to its hybrid-centered product strategy. But Watanabe cited a need to help meet new U.S. fuel standards.

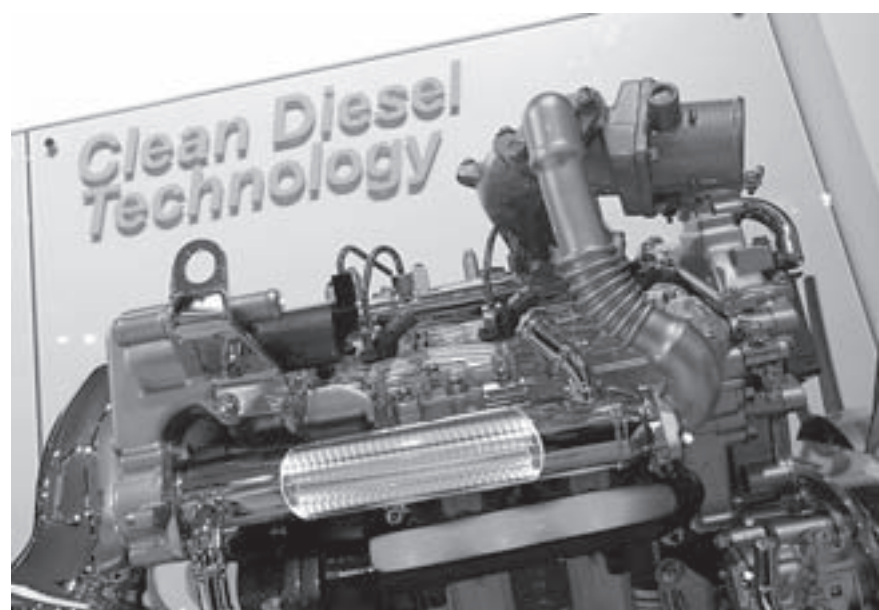
Toyota sets the standard for hybrid production and will likely surpass General Motors Corp. as the top global vehicle sales leader when final 2007 sales numbers are in.



**NEW CONCEPT:** Audi held the world premiere of the Audi R8 V12 TDI diesel engine concept car to the world automotive media during the press preview days at the North American International Auto show Jan. 13 in Detroit, Michigan. The NAIAS is the world's largest auto show. BRYAN MITCHELL/GETTY IMAGES



**GREEN:** The BMW Advanced Diesel is one of the green conscious vehicles on display at the 2008 North American International Auto Show in Detroit, Michigan, Jan. 15. GEOFF ROBINS/AFP/GETTY IMAGES



**CLEAN:** A Kia Motors diesel engine is on display, Jan. 15, at the North American International Auto Show in Detroit, Michigan. STAN HONDA/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

# Top Car Care Tips Keep Drivers Safe

(ARA)—Drivers face the unpredictable nature of the weather each year, especially during the winter season. The weather can vary from snow in the northeast, to thunderstorms in the south and torrential rains in the northwest. Regardless of the type of precipitation, preparation is key for safer travels.

Professional driver and automotive expert Barbara Terry lends her expertise to a topic important to anyone who owns a vehicle—driving safety. As spokesperson for Rain-X's annual Seemore Safety Campaign, she reminds motorists to follow some simple tips to be safe on the roads.

## Tip 1: Always have a clear view of the road

Without fail, it should be a top priority to ensure a clear view of the road ahead. Most of the decisions made while behind the wheel are based on vision, making efficiently functioning wiper blades essential for safe driving. Drivers should begin a routine to check their wiper blades every six months and change them at least once every year.



## Tip 2: Change blades midway through winter

At no other time of the year are drivers more tuned in to the weather than on Groundhog Day. As the midpoint of winter, Groundhog Day can serve as a yearly reminder for drivers to change their wiper blades. Now in its third year, the Seemore Safety Campaign reminds drivers of this simple task, which improves their visibility and safety on the roads.

## Tip 3: Clean grime and fill fluid levels regularly

Road grime is more likely to accumulate on the windshield during this time of year; so another good habit to adopt is to clean the windshield every time you fill the gas tank. It's best to make sure to check the washer fluid level at each fill-up and consider using a quality rain repellent for maximum windshield clarity. It is also important to note that sunlight and heat can be just as damaging to blades as wet weather, so check them throughout all seasons of the year.

## Tip 4: Check tires for damage, and lights for functionality

Drivers should pay extra attention to a vehicle's tires, as they represent the vehicle's sole connection to the road. Drivers should routinely inspect the tires for adequate tire tread, any damaging marks, and proper inflation. Drivers should also regularly walk around their vehicle to make sure all lights and signals work and that the windows and light covers are clean of dirt and grime.

## Tip 5: Take extra precautions during the winter months

During the winter months, when inclement weather is more prevalent, it is important for motorists to take every precaution possible. In preparation for a potential roadside breakdown, motorists should prepare a roadside emergency kit containing such items as roadside flares, a first aid kit, a flashlight and extra batteries, umbrella or poncho, a fire extinguisher, a spare tire, extra hats and gloves, a blanket, a tire inflator, and a few bottles of water.

For additional information on how to properly prepare a vehicle to ensure clear visibility throughout the season, log on to [www.Rain-X.com](http://www.Rain-X.com) and check out the Tips and Information page to learn more ways to outsmart the elements.

*This article is courtesy of ARAcontent.*