

For Immediate Release

December 31, 2010

The FabSchool – General Tire Ford Raptor Team Clears Scrutinering at the 2011 Dakar Rally

After a long day of paperwork, official stamps and dotting and crossing Ts, the Dakar Ford Raptor team cleared scrutinering for the 2011 Dakar Rally. The day, which began with a team meeting at 0800, started early considering they were up until 0200 with last minute preparations. At 1000hours Sue Mead took the wheel while Troy Johnson, Dan Moore and Chris Collard jumped in the back for a windy ride through the streets of Buenos Aires to the Dakar Village.

After two hours of paperwork, collecting required stamps for everything from personal blood type to support vehicle registration, the team headed back the holding area where more than 400 motos, Class 4 Semi trucks and four-wheeled vehicles waited. The final preparations before pulling the Raptor in front of the scrutinering judges was to install rally-required electronics: a ERTF GPS, Sentinel safety warning communicator, Iritrack satellite monitoring system, and the Terra Trip rally computer. All lights were green until they turned the key and lost all power to the vehicle.

Though time was short before their assigned scrutinering time slot, and emotions were high, Troy, Dan and Darren dug into the Raptor's web of new electronic wiring to diagnose the issue. Wiring schematics, circuit testers and tools joined a clatter of discussion as the crew reverse-engineered everything they had done. The culprit turned out to be crossed positive/negative wires on the Sentinel system, which tripped a fuse.

The Sentinel is a driver-activated accident-avoidance system with two functions, and has significantly enhanced safety on the track. Primarily, if a team needs to overtake a slower vehicle, the driver can use Sentinel to send a loud warning alarm that they intend to pass. The slower vehicle can return the 'acknowledgement' signal. In the case of an accident or stopped vehicle on the course, Sentinel can emit a signal to any competitor vehicle within 1500 feet. The oncoming vehicle's Sentinel sounds an audible and

visual alarm warning the driver that another vehicle is stopped.

With the issued diagnosed and power restored, the team proceeded to scrutiner where Dakar officials inspect everything from the welds on the roll cage, lighting and tires, to helmets, safety harnesses and fuel cells. Fortunately, Raptor is sporting new General Grabber Tires and Soltek lights and Fab School's fabrication work is bar none. Sue and Darren's Oakley racing suits are the best on the market and the Raptor's Crow harnesses and seats are industry standards.

Chief Mechanic Troy Johnson said, "Last minute hiccups are rough, but we worked through them. I'm stoked that we got the car through tech with minimal problems. The Raptor is spot on with on all accounts. I'm confident at this point that Sue and Darren will pilot the car through each stage. I'm happy with the group coming together as a team at this point. We'll be working under tight conditions in the next two weeks and it is crucial that we work as a fine tuned machine. "

The team will be up early on New Year's Day for the diver's meeting while the Troy and Dan address last minute details on the MAN support truck. At 1730 hours they will roll across the giant starting platform near the blue waters of the Atlantic Ocean and head for the Pacific three thousand miles to the west.

End

Please see attachment and images, and contact the team's media manager Chris Collard for additional information or to set up an interview with Dakar Ford Raptor team members.

Chris Collard
Adventure Architects Photography
PH: 001-916-952-3630
FX: 001-916-644-6380