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2011 Year End Review

It's that time of year again. The Holiday Season is in full swing. There is much anticipation of what is to come for 2012 and of course an opportunity to look back at 2011. There will be many articles written, retrospective news shows and year end reviews, serious and not-so-serious. So WHY should we be any different!! Let's take a look at where we have been and where we are going.

2011 saw many changes in our industry. The car manufactures, after being in the doldrums for the past couple of years are starting to see the light again. Many new products have been introduced along with old nameplates that have found new life. There are new engines, drivetrains, suspension and brake packages, and lots of bells and whistles, all being driven by new technology.

With focus on new fuel mileage regulations most manufactures have stepped up their Plug-In Electric and Hybrid programs as well as working to get better mileage and lower emissions out of their existing gasoline engines. There is also a big push in the diesel programs as light duty trucks have recently been added to the mileage regulation equation. "Infotainment" has become the new buzz word for the technologically savvy consumer and the message has not been lost in the automotive world. On-Board navigation, multiple entertainment channels and creature comforts are all seeing an uptick. Safety features from brighter smarter headlights to Back-up and Lane Intrusion warning systems have become common place in the new models.

Late in 2011 we saw GM launch *OnStar FMV*, or For My Vehicle, an aftermarket rearview mirror promising all the safety and connectivity of OnStar to non-GM models. This move should send a message to the aftermarket that the game is changing rapidly.

For the Aftermarket that message is; we must prepare now for what is to come our way in the near future. Manufactures need to understand how all these changes will affect their Parts Line and what opportunities exist for expansion. Distributors and parts outlets should become educated to recognize needs of their customers so they can adjust their stock accordingly. Shop owners will have to decide what changes in technology will continue to mean for their business. What new services should they offer and which current ones need to be revisited. How much education will their technicians need and how much do they invest in equipment.

For our part, Magnaflow continues its program of extensive research and testing. We know that advances in fuel and spark delivery along with complex Engine Management systems have a great affect on Catalytic Converter technology. Staying current with these changes will continue to be our focus in 2012 and beyond.

From all of us to you and your families, may you enjoy a prosperous and healthy New Year!

Cleaning up the environment...one converter at a time

Gary

