GM To Unveil Mich.-Built Chevy Sonic At Under $15,000

DETROIT (AP) — General Motors said Friday that pricing for its new Chevrolet Sonic will start at just under $15,000 when the sub-compact car hits dealer lots this fall.

Base models of the 2012 Sonic will start at $14,495 including the destination charge, but excluding tax, title, license and dealer fees. Its standard equipment includes 10 airbags, power door locks, remote keyless entry and 15-inch alloy wheels. The car will come in both sedan and hatchback body styles.

The Sonic will be built at a plant in Orion Township, Mich., near Detroit, where last year the United Auto Workers union agreed to expand use of a lower second-tier wage in order to entice General Motors Co. to bring production of the Sonic to the plant. About 40 percent of the union workers there will be paid about half the $28 per hour wage of longtime UAW workers.

The wage agreement saved roughly 1,500 jobs that probably would have gone to Mexico. But some UAW members were not pleased, saying the deal was one more in a long list of concessions that the union has made to a now profitable auto company.

No other car company builds a subcompact in the U.S. because the profit margins are too low to cover the higher labor costs. The Orion Township plant also will build the Buick Verano, a luxury version of the Chevrolet Cruze compact.

The hatchback version of the Sonic will start at $15,395, while pricing for the sedan and hatchback versions of the more upscale Sonic LT will begin at $15,695 and $16,495, respectively, GM said.

The LT versions of the Sonic will feature extras including a six-speaker sound system with a CD player and XM radio, power, heated side mirrors, a USB port, blue tooth and steering-wheel-mounted audio controls, heated seats, fog lamps and 17-inch alloy wheels.

Upgraded versions of the Sonic LT and sportier LTZ version that pair a 1.4 liter turbo engine with a six-speed manual transmission are expected to get 40 mpg on the highway, GM said.

GM shares rose 31 cents, or 1.1 percent, to $28.90 in morning trading Friday.

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