GAC goal is to enter US auto market by end of '19

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By Paul Welitzkin in Detroit |   
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China's GAC Motor said on Monday that the company plans to begin selling vehicles in the US by the fourth quarter of 2019.  
Zhang Fan, vice-president of engineering at GAC, a unit of Guangzhou Automobile Group Co Ltd, said at the 2018 North American International Auto Show (NAIAS) in Detroit that the model to be sold in the US will probably be one of the company's sport-utility vehicles.  
One potential candidate could be the Trumpchi GS7, a midsized SUV that seats five and was unveiled at last year's it show. GAC has marketed vehicles under the Trumpchi brand in China since 2010.  
GAC lacks the infrastructure to distribute its products in the US market like a dealership network.  
Feng Xingya, chairman of GAC Group, noted that the company has a joint venture in China with Fiat Chrysler Automobiles NV (FCA).  
"Over the years, we have enjoyed our collaboration with FCA," said Feng. "It is our hope to work with FCA in the North American market. "  
Asked about potential interest from GAC, FCA Chief Executive Sergio Marchionne said the Chinese company had helped FCA bring Jeep to the Chinese market through their joint venture and FCA was in turn trying to help GAC expand in the United States, the Associated Press reported on Monday.  
"They have global ambitions, they want to come to the US ... we are talking to them about if and how we can help them to accomplish this," the AP quoted Marchionne as saying.  
Yu Jun, the general manager of GAC Motor, said the company has been working since 2016 to have its products meet US safety and emissions requirements.  
"We will ensure that we can meet all the US regulations," he said.  
Michigan Governor Rick Snyder posed for pictures on the NAIAS stage with GAC officials.  
Ryan LaFontaine, chairman of the 2018 NAIAS, praised GAC. "It is truly an honor to have you here and watch you grow. We can't wait to see your vehicles on our streets," he said.  
GAC also presented two new models. The company unveiled an electric concept SUV called the Enverge and a midsized sedan named the GA4. The Enverge has a driving range of 371 miles and will eventually be sold in the US as well as China. The GA4 is targeted for the mainland market for right now.  
Volvo's XC60 luxury compact sport-utility vehicle was named the 2018 North American Utility of the Year at the Detroit show, the second Volvo in three years to win the award after the XC90 won in 2016.  
The vehicles represent a significant investment for Volvo and China's Zhejiang Geely Holding Group Co, which bought the company in 2010 from Ford Motor Co.  
"We are so proud the XC60 has won this prestigious award," Anders Gustafsson, president and CEO of Volvo Cars USA, said in a statement. "It is a very tough competition, and we thank all the judges for recognizing the great style, technology and engineering in the XC60."  
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