GAC generates some buzz at auto show

2018-01-19

China Daily USA |  
 Updated: 2018-01-19 16:51

Guangzhou Automobile Group Motor Co Ltd (GAC) was a major newsmaker at the North American International Auto Show this week as it announced aspirationsto begin selling vehicles in the United States at the end of 2019.  
GAC also announced at the Detroit, Michigan show that it will drop the brand name it uses for a car in China when it enters the US market because it could be confused with US President Donald Trump's surname.  
The automaker headquartered in Guangzhou, South China's Guangdong province, wants to become the first Chinese company to sell Chinese-branded vehicles in the United States.  
GAC established an R&D center last April in Silicon Valley, California.GAC plans to open a second R&D center in the Detroit area in the first half of 2018 as well as a design studio in Los Angeles.  
The automaker plans to establish a sales company and attend the National Auto Dealers Association's annual show in March to recruit potential dealers to sell GAC vehicles in the US.  
Aside from the cultural acceptance of a vehicle produced and exported from China to the US, which has been mitigated to some extent by the sale of the Buick Envision and Volvo's entire line-up, there are other hurdles.  
"The US has a mature legal system," said Feng Xingya, president of GAC Group and chairman of GAC Motor. "It is the most challenging (legal system) in the world."  
For the past eight years, GAC has sold cars and SUVs under the brand Trumpchi in its home market, but is researching new names.  
"We want to provide the best service for American customers, so we want to not be closely linked with politics,"said Wang Qiujing, GAC president. "This is the reason we want to rename the brand."  
German automaker BMW, with an eye to launching more electrified vehicles in China, is optimistic about selling eco-friendly cars in China, BMW Chief Financial Officer Nicolas Peter said.  
"China is a very important market to the BMW group. Last year, we nearly sold 600,000 cars in China, which is underlining the relevance and importance of China for BMW," Nicolas said.  
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