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Lots of big reveals planned for 2012 Detroit auto show

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The Ford exhibit at the 2011 Detroit auto show at Cobo. / SUSAN TUSA/Detroit Free Press

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There will be more new cars and trucks making their global debut at 2012's Detroit [auto](#) show, organizers told the Free Press on Monday, a sign that the show remains among the top auto shows.

Bill Perkins, chairman of the 2012 Detroit auto show, said Monday that manufacturers plan to reveal about 36 [new vehicles](#) for the first time anywhere, up from 32 global unveilings in the 2011 show.

The total number of introductions will be more than 40. Though fewer than the 53 revealed in January, the number typically grows as the show approaches and automakers disclose more plans.

New vehicles expected at this year's show include the 2012 BMW 3-series sport sedan, 2013 Cadillac ATS sport sedan, 2013 Ford Fusion and a new compact Dodge sedan.

Nissan is returning for the first time since 2009, and organizers are gaining 25,000 square feet of exhibition space from renovations at Cobo Center.

"It's the hub of the domestic market, and it gets the biggest international press coverage of any of the shows in the United States, so we are glad to be back," said Al Castignetti, general manager of Nissan North America.

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Spotlight on 2012 Detroit auto show grows as 2-day window for big reveals returns

A commitment by the Detroit Three to hold news conferences on two successive days helped the North American International Auto Show return to two full days of news conferences this year, the event's chairman said Monday.

Ford, General Motors, Chrysler and Toyota will all have major product introductions on Tuesday, Jan. 10, Bill Perkins, chairman of the 2012 North American International Show, told the Free Press. "I think Monday will probably have a few more goodies than Tuesday, but there will be some major announcements on Tuesday," Perkins said.

Last January, the Detroit auto show scheduled all of its news conferences on a single day, a decision that packed the news into a frantic schedule that was unpopular with manufacturers and national news media.

This year, more than 5,500 automotive journalists from around the world are likely to attend the show, which provides the global exposure that automakers crave.

The return to a two-day schedule is one of several signs that the show is returning to its pre-recession form, Perkins said. Nissan is returning for the first time since 2009, and manufacturers plan to reveal at least 40 vehicles never seen globally or in North America.

"So I think one of the big stories this year is going to be where we were in 2008, and now look where we are in 2012," Perkins said.

An event called the Gallery, at the MGM Grand Detroit, will feature 25 to 30 ultra-luxury cars on display for 500 wealthy guests. The event will be open to 300 American Express Centurion cardholders, 100 invited guests and 100 others willing to shell out \$500 for a ticket.

Perkins said he is expecting Charity Preview attendance to increase 20% to 12,500, based on early ticket sales. The 2012 Detroit auto show also will gain about 25,000 square



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feet in new space as part of a renovation of Cobo Center.

The new space will be occupied by transmission maker ZF Group and Japanese auto supplier Denso. That expansion is part of a \$221-million renovation plan to be completed by 2014. By then, Cobo Arena is to have a new marquee entrance and ballroom with a multistory, glass atrium and a view of the Detroit River. Patrons are to enter through the arena, walk through the lower-level area known as Michigan Hall and then take an escalator to the main exhibition hall.

Cobo Center, which opened in the 1960s, was expanded in 1988. The new upgrades, overseen by the Cobo Regional Convention Facility Authority, will carve out about 150,000 square feet of new space.

Other recently completed upgrades include all-new lighting for the main show floor and improvements to Cobo Center's roof, heating and ventilation system and the electric grid.

A few years ago, the region was embarrassed by reports of water leaking from the roof onto the cars on display.

"I have to compliment Larry Alexander and authority for the job that they've done," Perkins said. "From our standpoint, those things were really needed."

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