

Raptors Take Flight

Ford hosts off-road enthusiasts at Wild Horse Pass Motorsports Park

By Jennifer Johnson
Photos by Randall Bohl

Ford Motor Company catered to a crowd of off-road enthusiasts at its "Raptor Round-up" ride and drive event, held in late October at the newly transformed Wild Horse Pass Motorsports Park—formerly known as Firebird Raceway—located on the Gila River Indian Community in Chandler.

Adrenaline junkies were given the ability to mix it up on an off-road course, with the guidance of a professional driver in the passenger seat of a Ford F-150 Raptor SVT, the ultimate factory-built high-performance off-road pickup truck.

Danyail Coyle brought her family of five from Gilbert to check out the Raptor course. Danyail and her husband Justin gave the course a spin

with their three kids, ranging in age from 10 to 4. "My mom totally did a better job than my dad driving the truck," said Hannah Coyle, 10. "She actually caught air on the jumps!"

Each test drive lasted about 15 minutes and was provided free of charge courtesy of Ford and its Arizona-based dealerships. The all-day event also included food trucks, vendors, music, a Ford Raptor simulator, and Roush performance display.

Ford Raptor owners were given a special hour on the track for owners only, which allowed them to drive their own vehicles on the dirt course. That hour proved popular, as Raptor sales had set records over the past year, up 14 percent in 2013.

Raptor is also one of the fastest-turning vehi-

cles in the automotive industry, with only a 15-day supply on dealer lots. Day supply is a common industry measurement of retail customer sales demand—the lower the figure, the less time a vehicle remains on a dealer lot before it's sold. A 60-day supply is considered average for the auto industry. With Raptor sales expected to remain strong in 2014, Ford is increasing production from three trucks per hour to five.

"What's helping drive Raptor sales is that Raptor delivers unmatched off-road performance to our customers," said Doug Scott, Ford truck group marketing manager. "Raptor is also proof of our commitment to offer a truck for every customer and continuously improving them to meet

our customers' evolving needs." The 2014 Ford F-150 SVT Raptor Special Edition is the latest variant. Following the 2013 Ford F-150 SVT Raptor, which added available segment-exclusive HID headlights and industry-first factory forged-aluminum conventional wheels that can be upgraded to beadlocks, the 2014 Raptor Special Edition adds interior and exterior upgrades to further differentiate it to luxury truck buyers looking for uncompromising off-road performance.

"Ford's Phoenix Region has always been a top seller of the Raptor. The trucks really do fly off the showroom floors," said Brian Wayne, sales operations manager for Ford's Phoenix Region. "We like to bring this event to Phoenix to show our appreciation to our customers and have some fun at the same time."

Since launching as a 2010 model, the Ford F-150 SVT Raptor has set the benchmark for low- and high-speed off-road performance through aggressive all-terrain tires, industry-exclusive internal triple-bypass FOX Racing Shox dampers, skid plates and standard hill descent control. ■



Danyail Coyle, ready to tackle the Raptor course (above). Mom totally rocked it, say the Coyle kids (at right; photos: Ford Motor Company).



VORE Racing (the Vegas Off-Road Experience) helped host the event—supervised from high above Wild Horse Pass Motorsports Park in the VORE helicopter—with plenty of family features and adventures. Participants enjoyed food and vendor booths galore, while Ford provided a popular Raptor off-road simulator.

