

Major Transition

Story by Jennifer Johnson
Photos by Joe Sage

Ford's all-new full-size Transit van to replace venerable E-Series

Ford brought the all-new 2015 Ford Transit to Phoenix International Raceway to show off its features, performance and capability as part of the 18-stop nationwide Truth About Transit tour. More than 500 fleet customers, automotive enthusiasts and business owners came out to PIR over the course of three days to learn more about the full-size van. First, the media received a full briefing, then took their turn behind the wheel in the full range (as well as in the updated smaller Transit Connect van).

Transit is now on sale for the first time in US and Canadian dealerships, where it will eventually replace America's best-selling van of 35 years, the E-Series, first sold in 1961 as Ford Econoline. The new Transit delivers as much as 46 percent better fuel mileage than Ford E-Series and offers Ford van customers more choices and capability, including three engine options, three roof heights and two wheelbases.

"Transit has a proven legacy, with more than 7 million units sold worldwide since being introduced in Europe in 1965," said Megan Gillam, Commercial Vehicles Brand and Fleet Communications Manager at Ford. "Transit represents One Ford at its best, building on lessons learned from our decades of leadership in the commercial vehicle markets in the United States and Europe."

Peak performance and efficiency

Transit comes standard with a 3.7-liter V6 engine.

Customers also can choose from an available 3.5-liter EcoBoost® or 3.2-liter inline-5-cylinder Power Stroke® diesel. When equipped with the 3.5-liter EcoBoost engine, the all-new 2015 Transit low- and medium-roof regular wheelbase vans get a 14 MPG city/19 MPG highway EPA-estimated rating. This reflects an improvement of as much as 46 percent compared with the 10 MPG city/13 MPG highway rating for the Ford E-Series 6.8-liter V10 premium gas engine. The improved fuel mileage translates to savings as high as \$1,700 annually, based on EPA data.

Transit van delivers as much as 4650 pounds of maximum payload capacity—more than competing vans from General Motors and Chrysler. Maximum payload increases by at least 600 pounds across all sizes of Transit vans versus comparable E-Series vans. Transit delivers a maximum towing capacity of 7500 pounds.

Built Ford Tough

The globally proven 3.2-liter Power Stroke diesel engine underwent over 4000 hours of rigorous dynamometer testing specifically for Transit. Testing included running at maximum engine power for 750 hours (the equivalent of 14 nonstop round trips from New York to Los Angeles), simulating 10 years' service over 150,000 miles. To simulate the heavy use fleet and commercial customers put their vans through, Ford testers opened and slammed Transit doors 250,000 times—nearly

three times more than for a car.

The all-new Transit van offers a best-in-class gasoline engine maximum cargo capacity of 487.3 cubic feet when properly equipped—75 percent more than the largest E-Series van. The extended-length wagon model offers best-in-class cargo storage (100.5 cubic feet) behind the last row of seats in a 15-passenger version—ideal for shuttle service.

Transit high-roof van models offer best-in-class cargo height to make loading easier, and high-roof wagon models deliver best-in-class passenger compartment height, enabling passengers as tall as 6 feet 4 inches to stand upright.

Transit also has a best-in-class rear door opening height, and available 270-degree swing-out rear cargo doors offer quick and easy access.

"The all-new Transit offers our customers more choices than ever before," said Jim McGuire, commercial account manager at Earnhardt Ford in Chandler. "Business owners and fleet managers have diverse needs when it comes to vehicles, which is what makes the Transit such a good choice. There truly is something for everyone."

Customers can choose from van, wagon, chassis cab and cutaway body styles; three body lengths and two wheelbases for van and wagon, along with three roof heights; and XL and XLT trim levels. Transit vehicles can be custom-configured at TransitUpfits.com. For more info on the Truth About Transit tour, visit FordTransitTour.com ■



The Transit van includes easily replaced body panels in more vulnerable areas and available 270-degree opening rear doors.

Endlessly adaptable, high-strength steel members come predrilled and precut to accommodate about every imaginable add-on inside, and graphic wraps can be designed—and ordered—via an online interface.

The Transit chassis can adapt to everything from stakes and flatbeds to box trucks. Long, short, high or low, it's a lean and nimble handler on the road and autocross.

The big Transit lets the name of the smaller Transit Connect, new to the US about five years ago (fourth from left, main photo), finally make sense here, as in Europe all along.

JENNIFER JOHNSON is a freelance automotive journalist based in metro Phoenix. She has more than 15 years' experience in the fields of journalism, public relations and communication covering a wide variety of business sectors. Her emphasis is in special events and media within the automotive field, with a particular affinity for all things Ford. Jennifer earned her bachelor's degree in journalism from the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication at Arizona State University. When not covering auto news, she enjoys spending time with her young kids and husband, swimming year-round and taking road trips with her family.



The Ford Transit comes in van, wagon, chassis cab and cutaway body styles; three body lengths and two wheelbases, three roof heights; with three engines available; and XL and XLT trim levels. (Fourth from left is the smaller Ford Transit Connect.)



Photo: John M. Vincent/NWAPA