



## NEWS

### **Kia Motors America storms into Chicago with electric all-wheel-drive Trail'ster concept**

- **Advanced Soul-Based off-roader captures the essence of the “Go Anywhere” compact CUV intended for urban escape and mountain adventures**
- **With its bold design, fully retractable canvas roof and smartly integrated electric all-wheel-drive system, the turbocharged Trail'ster takes Kia's iconic Soul to a new level of expression, efficiency and capability**
- **Trail'ster was conceived in Kia's Irvine, California, design studio, birthplace of remarkable concept vehicles such as the Track'ster and GT4 Stinger**

**(SEOUL) February 12, 2015** – Aligning form and function to conceive a uniquely compelling vehicle for the city-dweller-turned-outdoor-adventurer, Kia Motors America (KMA) today took the wraps off the boldly designed Trail'ster e-AWD concept at the 2015 Chicago Auto Show. Based on the brand's iconic Soul urban passenger vehicle, the turbocharged Trail'ster – with its Polar Pearl Snowdrift/Terra Bronze Metallic paint scheme, roll-top canvas roof and armored aluminum skid plates – captures the essence of an advanced and capable CUV intended for those looking to escape their urban environs in search of higher-elevation playgrounds where snow, mud, streams and trails abound. Efficient and lightweight, the Trail'ster is ideal for transporting adventurers and their gear. With its rugged, functional and upscale approach to an active mountain-focused lifestyle, Trail'ster was dreamt up at Kia's California design studio, birthplace of the unforgettable Track'ster and GT4 Stinger.

“The Trail'ster concept is a near-future look at how the production Kia Soul would logically evolve into an AWD-capable version that's built to escape the city streets and roam into the mountain wilderness,” said Tom Kearns, chief designer, Kia Design Center of America (KDCA). “It takes the go-anywhere capability of an SUV and reimagines it within a compact and sporty package with an expressive design to match.”

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Underscoring Kia's focus on all-wheel drive capability, the Trail'ster enables a wide array of mountain activities, from skiing and snowboarding to camping, hiking and mountain biking. Whether it's trekking up to a high, snowy summit or traipsing down a muddy fire road to a piney trailhead, the Trail'ster – thanks to a rear axle-mounted electric all-wheel-drive system – is all about surefootedness in the wild.

## **A Soul Searcher, Inside and Out**

Based on the production Soul, the Trail'ster's overall shape and size are unmistakable. But with family genes tied closely to the thought-provoking Track'ster and Soul'ster concepts — which pushed Soul far into new directions to realize its performance and lifestyle possibilities — the Trail'ster also takes a dramatic departure from its production-car roots with styling and drivetrain components that turn Kia's popular urban passenger vehicle into a rugged runabout, further demonstrating that Soul is indeed the ideal platform for creativity and experimentation.

The exterior color was inspired by the earthy combination of springtime snow and mud, the terrain for which the Trail'ster has been created to travel confidently through on its way to outdoor destinations high above sea level. The Polar Pearl Snowdrift exterior paint is a modern neutral color, against which the warm and contrasting Terra Bronze Metallic tone of the roof and lower cladding brings connection to the soft dirt of roads less traveled. Anodized fire-red wheel accents and polished billet aluminum sections infuse a purposeful and sophisticated aesthetic to the Trail'ster's precise design, taking inspiration from high-tech, high-performance outdoor sporting gear.

Overhead, the Trail'ster features a stylish full-length, weatherproof rollback canvas roof to create an open-sky environment for occupants to enjoy the outdoors even before reaching their chosen high ground. This fully retractable cover also helps lighten the vehicle and lowers the center of gravity, promoting higher efficiency and improved dynamics. Integrated roof rack fittings with aluminum cross rails allow adventurers to tote mountain bikes or snowboards with ease.

The Trail'ster's use of advanced LED technology creates a strong and unique lighting identity from top to bottom, front to back. Upfront, the signature Kia grille bars extend through the K900-style projector headlamps to create a full-width frontal graphic. And below, expressive fog light elements give the vehicle a bold personality while providing additional wattage for illuminating off-the-beaten-track excursions. The Trail'ster's rear view takes on a tough-looking appearance framed by LED taillamps that are built into durable, ruggedized light housings. Highlighting its off-road prowess, the Trail'ster wears aluminum skidplates around the entire vehicle, providing a protective armor to shield the undercarriage from jagged rocks and ice.

Within, the Trail'ster's color and trim palette combines brown leather and aluminum accents to relay an earthy but upscale environment that's both durable and comfortable. Cabin materials are inspired by snow sports gear and equipment. "We drew from high-quality active lifestyle accessories like snowboarding gloves, boots and helmets to bring a premium level of craftsmanship and character to the interior space," commented Kearns.

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The focal point of this interior is a tactile and sturdy center console incorporating a thickset gear shifter, AWD controls and a bright red ignition button. Brown leather-trimmed seats feature a pillow-embossed textile for the seat inserts and the floor mats feature aluminum inlays for all-weather traction. Other interior finishes and details were also inspired by the

top-quality materials of cold-weather sporting gear, like leather, high-gloss paint and metallic trim.

Being based on the Kia Soul means the Trail'ster also benefits from efficient packaging and an abundance of space for passengers and their cargo as they head out on their next adventure.

### **Ready to Roam Anywhere**

The Trail'ster is primarily powered by a robust 1.6-liter turbocharged 4-cylinder engine outputting 185 horsepower and 185 pound-feet of torque through a six-speed automatic transmission, matched to an electric all-wheel-drive system on the rear axle intended for low-speed assist, enhanced launch acceleration and improved traction in inclement weather or off-road situations. In addition, this approach helps mitigate turbo lag by providing instant torque. The system also improves fuel economy over standard all-wheel-drive setups by operating only when needed and serving as an energy recovery mechanism. Further defining the near future perspective of Soul as a capable and efficient all-wheel-driver runner, the Trail'ster arrives as a "Through-the-Road" hybrid, which means it has two power sources (a front gas engine and a rear electric motor) that make up the hybrid system and meet "through the road," as opposed to inside the transmission with a common driveline connection. It requires all four wheels being driven in careful coordination, but there's no mechanical link between engine and electric motor. The link between the two is the road itself.

"This powertrain strategy of a downsized turbo and 'Through-the-Road' hybrid power yields a dual benefit of increased performance – torque and traction – and optimized efficiency," said Kearns. "This is AWD being done the advanced, intelligent and responsible way, while sacrificing nothing." Should the Trail'ster find its way to production, fuel economy would be targeted at a 25-30 percent improvement in city driving and 5-10 percent in highway driving over the normally aspirated 2015 2.0-liter gasoline Soul.

The Trail'ster's electric propulsion system draws energy from a 1.2 kWh Lithium Ion Polymer battery powering a 27 kW, 270 volt AC synchronous permanent magnet electric motor outputting 35 horsepower and 100 pound-feet of torque to the rear wheels and bringing total output to an impressive 220 horses and 285 pound-feet of torque. To further improve fuel efficiency, the system also utilizes a Hybrid Starter Generator (HSG) to start/stop the engine as needed (and to feed energy to the high voltage battery), and an electrically driven A/C compressor, which can run when the engine is shut off. This technology is designed for easy, lightweight packaging, with the compact battery pack stored under the cargo floor.

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Operationally, the rear electric drive system engages in one of three scenarios, depending on throttle position and road conditions: Under light throttle, the Trail'ster attains true clean mobility as the electric motor drives the car solely for a range of two to three miles; under normal driving, the rear electric motor assists the 1.6-liter turbo during acceleration events calling for greater power and torque; when treading off-road or on wet pavement, the electric

drive system is introduced when front wheel slippage is detected. Finally, the Trail'ster's electric motor acts as a generator to recover kinetic energy and recharge the battery when the vehicle is braking or coasting.

For traversing tough terrain, the Trail'ster has been raised more than two-and-a-half inches over the production Soul. In addition, this mountain rover wears Pirelli Winter Carving 245/45-19 snow tires for enhanced traction and utilizes KSport coilover shocks to absorb the impact of rough, uneven ground and rocky surfaces.

### **About Kia Motors America**

Kia Motors America (KMA) is the marketing and distribution arm of Kia Motors Corporation based in Seoul, South Korea. KMA proudly serves as the "Official Automotive Partner" of the NBA and LPGA and set an all-time annual sales record in 2014, surpassing the 500,000 unit mark for the third consecutive year. KMA offers a complete line of vehicles, including the rear-drive K900<sup>i</sup> flagship sedan, Cadenza premium sedan, Sorento CUV, Soul urban passenger vehicle, Soul Electric Vehicle<sup>ii</sup>, Sportage compact CUV, Optima midsize sedan, Optima Hybrid, the Forte compact sedan, Forte5 and Forte Koup, Rio and Rio 5-door subcompacts and the Sedona midsize multi-purpose vehicle, through a network of more than 765 dealers across the United States. Kia's U.S. manufacturing plant in West Point, Georgia, builds the Optima\* and Sorento\* and is responsible for the creation of more than 14,000 plant and supplier jobs.

Information about KMA and its full vehicle line-up is available at [www.kia.com](http://www.kia.com). For media information, including photography, visit [www.kiamedia.com](http://www.kiamedia.com). To receive custom email notifications for press releases the moment they are published, subscribe at [www.kiamedia.com/us/en/newsalert](http://www.kiamedia.com/us/en/newsalert).

### **About Kia Motors Corporation**

*Kia Motors Corporation ([www.kia.com](http://www.kia.com)) – a maker of quality vehicles for the young-at-heart – was founded in 1944 and is Korea's oldest manufacturer of motor vehicles. Over 3 million Kia vehicles a year are produced in 10 manufacturing and assembly operations in five countries which are then sold and serviced through a network of distributors and dealers covering around 150 countries. Kia today has around 49,000 employees worldwide and annual revenues of nearly US\$45 billion. It is the major sponsor of the Australian Open and an official automotive partner of FIFA – the governing body of the FIFA World Cup™. Kia Motors Corporation's brand slogan – "The Power to Surprise" – represents the company's global commitment to surprise the world by providing exciting and inspiring experiences that go beyond expectations.*

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\* The Sorento and Optima GDI (EX, SX & Limited and certain LX Trims only) are assembled in the United States from U.S. and globally sourced parts

<sup>i</sup> 2015 K900 V8 available in select trims and in select markets with limited availability.

<sup>ii</sup> 2015 Soul EV in select markets with limited availability.