



FORD FIESTA RALLYCROSS CARS TO MAKE U.S. DEBUT AT PIKES PEAK INTERNATIONAL HILL CLIMB AS PART OF THE MOST EXCITING ASSAULT ON THE 10-MINUTE MARK IN THE EVENT'S HISTORY!

Colorado Springs- May 27 – The new Ford Fiesta may not be hitting the streets of America officially until next year, but high-performance motorsport examples of the car will make their U.S. racing debut this summer when the Olsberg Motor Sport Evolution team from Sweden, managed by Andreas Eriksson, brings two new Fiesta Rallycross cars to compete in the 87th annual Pikes Peak International Hill Climb in Colorado Springs on July 19.

The arrival of the Fiestas lays down the gauntlet related to the Peak record and sets up the most exciting head-to-head duel in the Unlimited Class in the history of the event.

The two Fiestas will be driven by **Eriksson** and rally legend **Marcus Grönholm** in the Unlimited Class on Pikes Peak in a challenge to break the elusive ten-minute mark. Eriksson, 35, is a four-time Swedish rally champion, with multiple Rallycross victories, and Grönholm, 41, is one of World Rallying's greatest drivers, with two World Championships and 30 WRC victories.

Japanese superstar **Nobuhiro Tajima** will be back again this year in his Suzuki Sport speed machine to go for the mark again, but this time, he faces the new and exciting challenge posed by the entry of the Fiesta and their super-star drivers. He clocked 10:18.250 last summer in his attempt to crack the barrier.

But the trio will also face British Rallycross Champion **Mark Rennison**, a new entry who will bring his famous 1999 Ford RS200 to the Peak to square off with the three international drivers in the assault on the record.

"The new Fiesta is an engaging, fun to drive car that is off to a very successful start in Europe and Asia," said Jim Farley, group Vice-President, Ford Global Marketing and Communications. "Thanks to Andreas Eriksson, we're able to introduce the Fiesta to racing fans in the United States at the Pikes Peak International Hill Climb this summer, ahead of its launch in 2010."

Ford cars have been at Pikes Peak since the very first race in 1916, when four Ford-powered cars competed. In 1922, Ford scored its first victory when Noel Bullock took his 179ci, OHV, 50 hp Ford Special, nicknamed "Tin Lizzy" by the other competitors, to a surprise victory in the time of 19:50.9.

"We're pleased to have a top independent team like Olsbergs MSE coming to the U.S. with their Fiesta Rallycross cars to take on the challenge of Pikes Peak," said Brian Wolfe, director, Ford North America Motorsports. "This will be a great chance for enthusiasts here to see in this unique setting what a lot of the rest of the world is already talking about – that the Fiesta is a great road car and a great race car."

After finishing second in the Swedish championship last year, Olsberg's MSE team debuted its new Fiesta Rallycross car for this season's Swedish and European Rallycross championships, and it scored its first victory in just its second European championship event in Portugal this past month.

The Olsbergs MSE Fiesta Rallycross car is based on both the Fiesta hatchback model road cars. The all-wheel-drive Fiestas are powered by a 2.0-liter Duratec Ford engine capable of more than 800 horsepower.

The Fiesta Rallycross car's suspension system is the result of collaboration between Olsbergs Motor Sport Evolution, Öhlins and Ford of Europe's Team RS engineers, who are responsible for Ford's FIA World Rally Championship program.

"We worked night and day all winter to get the Fiesta ready on time for the European championships, and it was great to see it score a hard-earned victory in Portugal at the start of May," said Eriksson. "We are excited to be bringing the car to Pikes Peak and to be able to see what it can do in such a unique competition. It's a legendary event, and we've already been there to take a look at the challenge we will face. I'm convinced we'll be a top contender to break the 10-minute mark and give the Fiesta a proper racing debut in the U.S."

Ford Racing North America, although not directly involved in the project, will assist the team with logistical support while it is in America.

MEDIA CONTACTS:

Brent Maurer (313) 203-7185 bmaurer@pcgcampbell.com

Oksana Polovaya (+49-221-9018777) opolovay@ford.com

The Pikes Peak International Hill Climb is America's second-oldest motor sports race behind the Indianapolis 500, conducted since 1916. The race is run on a 12.42 mile course that begins at 9,390 feet and finishes at the 14,110-foot summit of America's Mountain.

This year's race has 11 classes and features a variety of automotive, semi truck, exhibition, open wheel, super stock car, pro truck and motorcycle classes with a field approaching 200 competitors.

The event's popular "Fan Fest," which will attract some 35,000 fans and participants, is set for the evening of Friday, July 17, in downtown Colorado Springs. The crowds will be able to see some of the autos, trucks and motorcycles up close, meet the drivers, and enjoy music, food and entertainment.

Tickets: www.ticketwest.com (866) 464-2626

General Admission - \$40 (Race Day \$45)

VIP - \$80 (start line area only) includes: breakfast, lunch and beverages

*pre-purchase only, not available on race day

Family 4 Pack - \$125 (4 general admission tickets; reg. price = \$160)

*pre-purchase only, not available on race day

Camping - \$75 until May 31, \$100 after June 1; only 200 permits are available. **This is the only day camping is allowed on Pikes Peak each year.**

TCI® Tire Centers, LLC and Hankook Tire America have been selected as title sponsors of the 2009 Pikes Peak International Hill Climb.



Complete information and competitor registration at www.ppihc.com

