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## **Mopar HEMI® Challenge Celebrates 15th Anniversary at 2015 NHRA U.S. Nationals**

- Mopar HEMI® Challenge marks its 15th anniversary at 2015 NHRA U.S. Nationals at Lucas Oil Raceway in Indianapolis on September 3-4
- Winner earns \$15,000 purse, a unique HEMI Challenge trophy and special winner's jacket
- Mopar will once again provide cash prize payouts for the top 16 qualifiers and commemorative gifts for all participants

June 17, 2015, Auburn Hills, Mich. - For a 15<sup>th</sup> consecutive season, Mopar will underscore its commitment to Sportsman racing competition within the National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) with the presentation of the Mopar HEMI® Challenge. The ever-popular annual vintage racing event will be staged during the prestigious U.S. Nationals in Indianapolis, Indiana, with this year's shootout scheduled to take place September 3-4 at Lucas Oil Raceway.

The inaugural HEMI Challenge made its debut in 2001 on the quarter-mile track at the U.S. Nationals and showcases 1968 HEMI-powered Dodge Darts and Plymouth Barracudas — the classic muscle cars that contributed to the Mopar brand's legendary reputation and success at the drag strip.

This year's edition celebrates the 15th anniversary of the heads-up shootout and provides a \$15,000 winner's prize, a unique HEMI Challenge trophy, and a custom Mopar HEMI Challenge winner's jacket. Cash prizes will be awarded to the top 16 qualified cars that advance to the elimination rounds on Friday, September 4.

Every Mopar-powered Super Stock/Automatic-HEMI (SS/AH) class competitor participating in the Mopar HEMI Challenge will receive a 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary event hat, replica license plate, commemorative poster and participant decals to display on their vehicle. Mopar will also host a Sportsman Appreciation Night on Thursday, September 3. In addition to food and beverages, Mopar will provide a vehicle suspension seminar, a new product display, prize giveaways and the opportunity for attendees to win a Mopar Gen II HEMI engine block.

"The Mopar HEMI Challenge is a race that pays tribute to Mopar's brand heritage," said Pietro Gorlier, President and CEO — Mopar Brand Service, Parts and Customer Care, FCA. "These competitors and fans are the backbone of drag racing, and we treasure their passionate support. It's this passion that has helped to make Mopar the brand that it is today."

"The longevity of the program is a tremendous testament to the commitment MOPAR has to the NHRA and its racers," said Gary Darcy, NHRA senior vice president, sales and marketing. "The Mopar HEMI Challenge is yearly one of the most anticipated events for our sportsman racers. It is also a can't miss event for NHRA drag racing fans and has grown to be a crown jewel in the NHRA."

The first Mopar HEMI Challenge was won by Bucky Hess (2001), followed by drivers Richard Beshore (2002), Jerry Jenkins (2003), and Jeg Coughlin Jr. (2004). The driver with the most HEMI Challenge trophies is defending champion Charlie Westcott Jr., of Parma, Michigan, who has earned six career wins, (2005, 2006, 2008, 2011, 2012 and 2014) with his father, Charlie Westcott Sr. (2009), Jim Daniels (2010) and Rick Houser (2007 and 2013) interrupting those victories with their own trips to the winner's circle.

This year's Mopar HEMI Challenge is scheduled to take place Thursday and Friday during the annual NHRA U.S. Nationals at Lucas Oil Raceway in Indianapolis, Indiana, held from Sept. 2-7.

### **About NHRA**

Headquartered in Glendora, Calif., NHRA is the primary sanctioning body for the sport of drag racing in the United

States. NHRA presents 24 national events featuring the NHRA Mello Yello Drag Racing Series, NHRA Lucas Oil Drag Racing Series and NHRA Pro Mod Drag Racing Series. NHRA provides competition opportunities for drivers of all levels in the NHRA Summit Racing Series and the NHRA Drags: Street Legal Style presented by AAA. NHRA also offers the NHRA Jr. Street program and the Summit Racing Jr. Drag Racing League for youth ages 5 to 17. In addition, NHRA owns and operates five racing facilities: Atlanta Dragway in Georgia; Auto-Plus Raceway at Gainesville in Florida; National Trail Raceway in Ohio; Lucas Oil Raceway at Indianapolis; and Auto Club Raceway at Pomona in Southern California. For more information, log on to [NHRA.com](http://NHRA.com), or visit the official NHRA pages on Facebook, YouTube and Twitter.

#### **About Mopar Motorsports**

Mopar's commitment to professional motorsports competition was established in the 1950s when a partnership ignited with drag racing pioneer Don Garlits, resulting in the breaking of numerous speed and performance barriers in HEMI®-powered vehicles over the next several decades. In 2015, Mopar looks to add to its streak of five NHRA World Championship titles in the Pro Stock (2012 and 2013) and Funny Car (2011, 2012, and 2014) categories in four years. While Mopar remains involved in a various professional motorsports series, it continues to honor its roots by being a proud supporter of amateur racing within the NHRA with its sponsorship of the HEMI Challenge and Mopar's Tom Hoover Sportsman Challenge.

#### **About Mopar Brand**

Mopar (a simple contraction of the words Motor and PARTs) was trademarked in 1937 with the launch of an antifreeze product, but it truly made its mark in the 1960s during the muscle-car era. From Mopar Performance Parts to enhance speed and handling for both road and racing use, the brand soon expanded to include technical service and customer support.

Today, Mopar is FCA's service, parts and customer-care brand and distributes more than 500,000 parts and accessories in over 150 markets around the world. With more than 50 parts distribution centers and 27 customer contact hubs globally, Mopar integrates service, parts and customer-care operations in order to enhance dealer and customer support worldwide. Mopar is the source for genuine parts and accessories for FCA brands.

Mopar parts are engineered together with the same teams that create factory-authorized specifications for FCA vehicles. This offers a direct connection that no other aftermarket parts company can provide. A complete list of Mopar accessories and performance parts is available at: [www.mopar.com](http://www.mopar.com).

#### **Mopar-first Features**

Mopar has introduced numerous industry-first features including:

- Vehicle-information apps: first to introduce smartphone vehicle-information applications, a new channel of communication with customers
- Electronic owner manuals: first to introduce traditional owner manuals in a DVD and brief user-guide format. First to offer complete vehicle-information kits in Spanish
- Wi-Fi: first to offer customers the ability to make their vehicle a wireless hot spot
- Wireless charging: first to introduce in-vehicle wireless charging for portable devices
- Electronic Vehicle Tracking System (EVTS): first to market with interactive vehicle tracking device that sends owner a text when vehicle is driven too fast or too far based on pre-set parameters
- wiADVISOR: first to provide factory-connected tablet technology in the service lane for instant vehicle diagnosis
- wiTECH: first to support vehicle diagnosis and software updates leveraging off-the-shelf personal computers and a dedicated wireless tool network
- 2011 Mopar Challenger Drag Pak: first to introduce a 500-plus cubic-inch V-10 drag-race package car

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