



## **2009 Team Makes Successful Car Debut**

On an unusually warm weekend during the first week of February, the 2009 Virginia Tech Formula team successfully completed its journey from concept to a functional driving machine. Friday February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2009 was the very first time the car laid some rubber down on the pavement. The whole Maroon team along with a few Orange team members showed up to Shelor Motor Mile for the event. Being the first driving event, the team chose to take it a little easy to break things in. No official course was set up, but instead the drivers would simply drive the car around the lot to feel things out. Surprisingly there were no major problems with the car, only a few minor issues that were able to be repaired on site allowing the team to drive the car all afternoon. Longtime Virginia Tech Motorsports team members Mike Hultberg and John Fratello were the first two guys to take hold of the wheel. Ryan Ilardo was the third and final driver for the 1<sup>st</sup> day, wrapping up what was certainly one of the more successful first time driving days the program has seen in some time.

Fueled by the success of Friday, the team headed back out on Sunday February 8<sup>th</sup> for the team's 2<sup>nd</sup> driving day. This time, the plan was a more structured driving day with an actual course planned out with the team's focus of fine tuning the shifting system while also monitoring the vehicle for other problems, interferences, and the possibility of part failure. Ryan Ilardo was first in the car and drove the course for most of the shifting tuning. Following him were Ryan Gaylo, Chris Maupin, and the elder statesmen of VT Motorsports, Benjamin Langford. While the day overall was a major success, there were a few snags along the way. For one, the battery completely died causing an hour in downtime while team members searched around for a working battery. The second snag of the day occurred mid-afternoon when the oil pulley belt snapped, but the team was prepared and back on the track without losing much time. Lastly and most concerning, overheating issues put a mild damper on the mood of the team but it is believed this can be attributed to no duct work being on the car at the time. The team already has temporary ducts in the works for the next driving day until the body can be completed.

Despite the small issues and concerns from the first two driving days for the 2009 car, overall the team has considered them to be a great success. Having no major failures during the first days of driving can be attributed to the quality of workmanship put in by everyone on the 2009 team. Moving forward, the 2009 team looks to continue a rigorous driving schedule in hopes of catching any failures before competition and improve upon all the hard work put in so far.

