



Weekly Car Dealers Newsletter

December 14, 2009

This information that follows is taken from sources including *The Carconnection*, *Autoweek*, and other industry sources.

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[CHRYSLER DEALERS ASK FOR NEW ADS TO SLOW SALES PLUNGE](#)

Chrysler Group LLC dealers have asked the company to pull new television ads and restore regional marketing budgets after U.S. sales declined 25 percent in November, people familiar with the matter said. Members of Chrysler's national dealer council, an advisory body to the automaker, called for the ads to be stopped in a phone call with the Auburn Hills, Michigan-based company's sales leadership this week ... The dealers would like to have Jeep, Chrysler and Dodge ads that show the vehicles more and highlight features, price and available bargains to counter marketing claims of other automakers, the people said. *Source: [Bloomberg](#)*

[AUTO CRITIC TAKES A SEAT IN GM'S TURNAROUND](#)

For years, Stephen J. Girsky made a living telling Detroit's three auto makers that they needed to fix themselves. Now in his new role at General Motors Co., he'll have to put his words into action. Mr. Girsky, once a high-profile Morgan Stanley auto analyst who has been a member of the auto maker's board since the summer, last week was named a special adviser to Chairman and interim Chief Executive Edward E. Whitacre Jr. Mr. Girsky's role will be to "clear away" the hurdles standing between Mr. Whitacre's management team and success. *Source: [The Wall Street Journal](#)*

GM, FORD GIRD FOR SMALL-CAR SHOWDOWN AS CONSUMERS SHUN SUVS

Gone are the days of relying solely on boasts about towing capacities and horsepower to move the metal. Ford and Chevy dealers soon will start talking more about fuel economy and iPod outlets as the companies roll out new compact and subcompact cars. To prepare, the dealers are remodeling their stores to be more customer-friendly and are becoming more adept online, hoping to connect with car shoppers through social-networking campaigns and email.

Source: [The Wall Street Journal](#)

MOTORISTS' CHOICE AWARDS

As selected by IntelliChoice.com here are some of the 2009 winners. The full list is available at www.intellichoice.com

Large Car (tie)	Cadillac DTS and Lincoln Town Car
Sports Car	Chevrolet Corvette
Sporty Car	Dodge Challenger
Large Pickup	Chevrolet Avalanche
Premium Luxury SUV	Cadillac Escalade
Large SUV	Chevrolet Tahoe
Large Cross-over SUV	Chevrolet Traverse
Compact Cross-over SUV (tie)	Hyundai Tucson and Jeep Patriot

CHEVY, BUICK-GMC BOSSES OUT AT GM

The brand heads of Buick-GMC and Chevrolet are leaving General Motors Co., continuing a management upheaval sparked by the Dec. 1 ouster of CEO Fritz Henderson.

Buick-GMC head Michael Richards, who left Ford Motor Co. in 2008, has quit eight days after joining GM, according to a source with direct knowledge of the situation. *Bloomberg News* first reported Richards' departure.

Brent Dewar, who was appointed in July to steer Chevrolet, has elected to leave GM within four months. He is succeeded by James Campbell, 45, who today took over as general manager of the division. Campbell had been responsible for GM's Fleet and Commercial Operations and has been with the automaker since 1988. Dewar, who had been GM's European sales chief, was tapped to head Chevrolet after Vice Chairman Bob Lutz was put in charge of marketing following GM's emergence from bankruptcy five months ago. But three days after Henderson was forced out, Susan Docherty took over as vice president of sales, service and marketing.

Lutz shed his marketing title and took on an advisory role to Chairman Ed Whitacre. Dewar will work with successor Campbell through April 1 "to ensure a smooth transition at Chevrolet" before retiring "to dedicate more time to his family and to pursue personal interests," GM said in a statement. He will also serve out the remainder of his 31-year GM career as an adviser to Reuss.

Before running GM's fleet and commercial unit, Campbell held various positions in field sales, retail incentives, marketing and customer relationship management. He takes over a position held by Susan Docherty two months ago.

Chevy's importance

The Chevrolet appointment is especially crucial because GM expects the brand to carry the burden of driving sales and market share as the automaker tries to sell Hummer and Saab and closes down Saturn and Pontiac. Chevrolet's U.S. sales have fallen 27 percent through November in a market that is down 24 percent from a year earlier. GM's overall sales have declined 32 percent.

The change comes at a time of tumult at GM as executives who devoted a full career to the Detroit-based automaker find themselves being shown the door -- or head for it on their own. The Obama administration dismissed Henderson's predecessor, Rick Wagoner, in March after he accepted U.S. rescue loans while resisting calls to consider a restructuring in bankruptcy. Henderson had vowed to shake up GM's insular and slow-moving decision-making process.

Whitacre, who also became acting CEO with Henderson's departure, said this week that the new team of GM executives would not have long to show results. Whitacre also said the automaker is on the verge of hiring a new finance chief while seeking a permanent CEO.

Source: Automotive News, Reuters

CAR THIEVES PREFER...

The Insurance Bureau of Canada has released its annual list of the most stolen cars in the country using info from actual insurance claims, and the list reveals some disturbing trends. While the Honda Civic once again tops the list, as it has for five years running, there are also a lot of high-end SUVs on the list this year.

The top 10 stolen vehicles in 2009 were:

1. 2000 Honda Civic SiR 2-door
2. 2003 Cadillac Escalade ESV 4-door AWD
3. 1999 Honda Civic SiR 2-door
4. 2006 Chevrolet/GMC Trailblazer SS 4-door 4WD
5. 2002 Cadillac Escalade EXT 4-door AWD
6. 2005 Cadillac Escalade ESV 4-door AWD
7. 1997 Mitsubishi Eclipse Spyder 2-door
8. 2000 Audi S4 Quattro 4-door
9. 2006 Hummer H2 4-door AWD
10. 2005 Cadillac Escalade 4-door 4WD

The Escalade shows up four times on the Top 10 list in different models, and a Hummer is also on the list. Those results suggest crime patterns are changing.

While in previous years, cars that made the Top 10 were the kind that young thieves found easy to steal, the Escalades and Hummers are being stolen by sophisticated crime rings, says Rick Dubin, the vice-president of investigations at IBC.

Dubin says organized crime outfits know how to steal these vehicles and know they can make huge profits by shipping them overseas, where they are valued in part because they navigate the terrain so well. "These high-end SUVs, all-wheel drive and four-wheel drive, we're seeing them at the Port of Montreal, we're seeing them at the port of Halifax," Rubin told Canada AM Thursday. "We know these are being sent to destinations like Ghana, Nigeria, West Africa, Lebanon and the Middle East. They're going to Eastern Europe and they're even going to Jamaica."

Rubin notes that other high-end four-wheel-drive vehicles are also being stolen in bigger numbers, including the BMW X5 and X6, Toyota RAV4 and Lexus RX350.

On average, about 420 vehicles are stolen in Canada a day. That's about one car every three-and-a-half minutes. According to Statistics Canada, 125,271 vehicles were stolen in Canada in 2008. That's a drop of 15 per cent from 2007, when rates were also down from the year before. While it's encouraging that the numbers are dropping, many of today's stolen cars are never recovered. *Source CTV.ca*

FORD OFFICIALS ASK MICH. LAWMAKERS FOR TAX CREDITS

LANSING, Mich. -- Ford Motor Co. officials are asking Michigan legislators to give the automaker around \$120 million in tax credits earmarked for companies that develop batteries for hybrid and electric vehicles. Ford has been assembling batteries from auto supplier Delphi Corp. in Mexico. It plans to start producing its own battery systems beginning next year. *Source: [The Associated Press](#)*
