

# Detroit Auto Scene®

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"FIRST IN THE HEART OF DETROIT, SINCE 1933"

JULY 9, 2012



The new Chevrolet Malibu had a 32 percent increase in sales.



2013 Escape is selling on dealer lots in less than five days.



179 percent increase in monthly sales of the Chrysler 300.

## Big Three Up 22 Pct. with 1.3 Million Sold in June

### LaCrosse, Malibu Lead GM

DETROIT (AP) – General Motors Co. said its U.S. sales rose 16 percent in June on solid demand for small and midsize cars.

Sales of the Chevrolet Volt electric car more than tripled over June 2011, to more than 1,700. GM also saw double-digit sales increases for the Chevrolet Malibu and Buick LaCrosse midsize cars.

Sales of the Chevrolet Cruze small car were down 24 percent. The Cruze surged in popularity last year when Japanese cars were unavailable after the earthquake. But GM made up for some of that volume with strong sales of its new Chevrolet Sonic subcompact.

GM's best-seller, the Silverado pickup, was up 3 percent as housing construction continues to recover. GM said all truck and SUV sales were up 11 percent.

"Across the board, June was a strong month for GM," said Kurt McNeil, vice president, U.S. Sales Operations. "The combination of new products, available credit, lower fuel prices and modest economic growth was a stronger influence on consumer behavior than economic and political uncertainty."

For the month, GM passenger car sales were up 12 percent year over year, thanks to a 32 percent increase in Chevrolet Malibu sales and a 21 percent increase in Buick LaCrosse sales.

Combined sales of all seven Chevrolet, Buick, GMC and Cadillac crossovers were up 30 percent versus a year ago.

Truck sales were up 11 percent, with all pickup, van and SUV segments up year over year.

Retail deliveries were up 8 percent year over year. Fleet deliveries were up 36 percent versus a year ago due in part to the timing of customer deliveries. In July, fleet volumes and mix are expected to be down month over month and year over year.

GM was buoyed by the news that sales of its Volt plug-in car had tripled, this following a slow sales period.



Army star on the hood of the Jeep Wrangler Freedom ride.

### Freedom Edition A 'Tip of the Hat' To U.S. Military

AUBURN HILLS – More than 70 years ago, the U.S. government informed automakers that it was looking for a "light reconnaissance vehicle" for military use.

Willys-Overland quickly created the Willys Quad – which became the Willys MA and MB – but the Army, and the world, came to know the vehicle that would help win a world war as the Jeep.

As a tribute to U.S. military

### Escape, Explorer Popular SUVs

DETROIT (AP) – Ford Motor Co. says its U.S. sales rose 7 percent in June on strong demand for the new Escape SUV.

Sales of the new Escape, which debuted last month, were up 28 percent. Ford said the Escape had its best month ever at 28,500 sold.

Ford also saw strong sales for its Explorer midsize SUV, which was up 35 percent.

But small cars were weaker than June 2011, when Ford gained some sales while its Japanese rivals struggled after the earthquake. Sales of

the Fiesta and Focus small cars were both down from last year.

Ford's best-seller, the F-Series pickup, was up 11 percent as housing construction recovers.

Ford sales are increasing across the company's lineup – with cars up 3 percent, utilities up 9 percent and trucks up 9 percent year to date.

In June, the Ford Escape set an any-month record – with sales up 28 percent – while the Ford Fusion set a record for June.

### Fiat on Increase, 300 Way Up

DETROIT (AP) – From the tiny Fiat 500 to the Ram pickup truck, sales of Chrysler vehicles charged higher in June, despite concerns that buyers would be turned off by slower hiring.

Chrysler U.S. sales rose 20 percent – its best June in five years – thanks to demand across its lineup.

The industry overall is expecting growth of 20 percent over June of last year. While the pace of sales is expected to cool somewhat from the start of the year, underlying demand remains strong. New models like the Ford Escape and Dodge Dart – which both arrived in dealerships last month – should draw out buyers.

Meanwhile, Volkswagen's sales rose 34 percent on strong demand for two recently redesigned cars: the Beetle and the Passat. Volkswagen is on track to have its best year in the U.S. since 1973 thanks to a cheaper, revamped lineup.

Demand for Chrysler's Ram pickup – its best-seller – increased 12 percent over a year earlier as home building perked up. Cars saw even bigger increases.

Sales of the Fiat 500 and the Chrysler 300 large sedan more than doubled from a year ago. And Chrysler sold 200 compact Darts last month.

Earlier this spring, sales were on track to reach 14.5 million this year. The pace dropped to 13.8 million in May and most analysts expected it to stay below 14 mil-

lion in June.

But so far, carmakers aren't panicking. Chrysler predicted a rate of 14.4 million for June.

"Although this softer sales rate may persist over the next few months, we believe that 2012, like 2011, will finish out strongly," Barclays analyst Brian Johnson wrote in a recent note to investors.

Sales in the first four months of this year were boosted by mild weather and the post-earthquake return of Japanese inventories. But since then, the economic picture has gotten cloudier. In June, employers scaled back hiring and manufacturing shrank for the first time in nearly three years. Consumer confidence – which needs to be strong for buyers to invest in new cars – fell for the fourth straight month.

The news isn't all worrisome. If sales come in at 13.8 million for the year, they would still be stronger than the 12.8 million in 2011. And they'd be much stronger than the 30-year low of 10.4 million during the recession in 2009.

There continues to be a lot of demand from buyers who bought cars in the middle of the last decade and need to replace them. Annual sales hit a high of 17 million in 2005, and those cars are now seven years old. Low interest rates and better credit availability could also lure buyers. The average interest rate on a 60-month new-car loan is now 4.5 percent, down from 6.98 percent two years ago, according to Bankrate.com.

## Visit Henry's First Model T Plant, Located in the New Center Area

DETROIT – The century-old factory and office where Henry Ford created his historic Model T car is now welcoming visitors with extended opening hours for the summer of 2012.

Ford's Piquette Avenue plant has been restored and opened to the public by a group of preservationists and Ford history enthusiasts who have worked for a decade to renovate it.

"It's the first building built and owned by the Ford Motor Co. and the only early automobile plant in Detroit open to the public," said Jerald Mitchell, president of the group.

"Ford produced eight models here between 1904 and

1910. The Model T, called the car that changed the world, was designed and engineered in this facility," Mitchell added.

"The first 12,000 Model T cars were built here, starting in September, 1908."

The Piquette Avenue plant was purchased and saved from potential destruction in 2000 with donations by members of the Henry Ford Heritage Association.

It was then transformed in 10 years from a semi-derelict building into the viable automotive museum that it is today. It is now owned and operated by a nonprofit corporation that accepts tax-deductible donations to support its operation.



Dealers will donate \$250 from sale of each Jeep to charity.

members past and present, the Jeep brand has created the new 2012 Jeep Wrangler Freedom edition.

Available in red, white or

blue, the new Jeep Wrangler Freedom edition features a military-inspired star decal on

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## Boss 302 Laguna Seca Auction Will Benefit MS

SOUTHFIELD – The National MS Society, Michigan Chapter, is raffling off a one-of-a-kind 2013 Ford Mustang Boss 302 Laguna Seca - Mustang Alley Edition to help raise money for MS programs and services offered to the 18,000 people in Michigan now living with MS (multiple sclerosis).

In addition to donating the 2013 Mustang, Ford Motor Co. is a charity partner with the National MS Society and provides fundraising and volunteer support throughout the year.

Raffle tickets are now on sale and can be purchased through the National MS Society and Ford Motor Co. Tickets are \$10 each or three for \$20. A ticket order form is available online at nationalMSsociety.org/mig to purchase tickets by mail, fax or phone.

Note that this production, one-of-one Boss 302 Laguna Seca includes all of the 2013 Laguna Seca content, plus:

• Exterior – unique color combination of Sterling Gray Metallic paint with Gloss Black reflective striping, rear pedestal spoiler, mirror caps and special badging;

• Interior – Charcoal Cloth interior with custom embroidered Recaro Seating and Sterling Gray X-brace;

• Wheels: Front: 19-inch x 19-inch; Rear: 19 x 10 Ford Racing Aluminum with unique finish;

• Performance – A coupon for TrackKey from Ford Racing will be included with the vehicle to be installed at an authorized Ford dealership.

• Boss Track Attack program, offered through Team Mustang and Ford Racing – includes instructor lead training and track time at Miller



Raffle of Mustang Boss 302 will be held during the Dream Cruise.

Motorsports Park in Utah.

This Mustang will be displayed and the winning ticket drawn in Mustang Alley at Woodward and 9 Mile Road in Ferndale during the Dream Cruise on Aug. 18.

## Downtown Royal Oak Now Showing DIA Art

Six high-quality reproductions of paintings from the Detroit Institute of Arts' permanent collection can be found in temporary locations around downtown Royal Oak this summer.

Each of six reproductions will be in the original size on Lumacore Vinyl, mounted in weatherproof ornate wood.

Programs on these works will be held by the Royal Oak Commission for the Arts.

Visit the city's website for more details.



Chevrolet Silverado at the All-Star Game in Kansas City.

## Silverado Goes to the All-Star Game

DETROIT – To celebrate the 2012 MLB All-Star Game, Chevrolet, the Official Vehicle of Major League Baseball, is bringing its own all-star lineup of cars, trucks and crossovers to Kansas City for activities that lead up to the 83rd Midsummer Classic on Tuesday, July 10.

"We're looking forward to introducing our family of Chevrolet vehicles to current and new customers in Kansas City, and celebrating our shared love of baseball," said

Phil Caruso, Chevrolet national promotions manager.

"We will have product displays, ride-and-drives and other activities around Kansas City to enhance the fan and customer experience."

Chevrolet has been the Official Vehicle of Major League Baseball since 2005.

In addition to bragging rights for either the American League or National League, the MLB All-Star Game determines home-field advantage during the World Series.

Chevrolet's involvement in the 2012 MLB All-Star Week events include free ride-and-drives of Chevrolet's hottest cars, trucks and crossovers at MLB All-Star FanFest through Tuesday outside of the Kansas City Convention Center. Seven other Chevy vehicles will be on display inside.

Fans also can drive Camaros, all-new Malibu sedans and a Corvette on a closed-course Test Track at Kauffman Stadium for three days.