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Chevy Cruze Tops Small Car Sales

LORDSTOWN, Ohio (AP) – The Ohio-built Chevrolet Cruze was the top selling small car in the United States for the month of September.

General Motors says it sold 25,787 Cruzes last month. They're built in GM's Lordstown plant near Youngstown.

The Cruze's nearest competitor in the sector was the Toyota Corolla, with 23,036 sold last month.

Sales of the Cruze dropped by 188 from the sales record set in August. Still, GM says last month was its best overall September since 2008.

LTU, DTE Install Charging Station for EVs

by Jim Stickford

Executives from DTE Energy were on hand to inaugurate a new charging station on the campus of Lawrence Technical University in Southfield Oct. 6.

Both the school and the utility are helping build the infrastructure needed to make electric and electric-hybrid vehicles more practical.

Vincent Dow, vice president – distribution operations for DTE, said his company's execs wanted to help inaugurate the charging state because DTE made a vow to the auto industry to be supportive in the building of infrastructure to support electric vehicles.

"We do funding for our residential customers as well," Dow said. "We give \$2,500 in support to go toward the installation of a home charging unit. That should cover the expense for most of our customers. It might not totally pay for our rural customers, but certainly should pay for our urban customers quite easily."

Dow said DTE has now installed about 40 public charging stations across metro Detroit. They just put one in at the MGM Grand parking structure.

At Lawrence Tech, they installed one 120-volt station and one 240-volt station.

Tim Menke, Tactical Marketing & Electric Transportation Infrastructure manager for DTE, said one advantage to using a public charging station is the cost – it's usually free.

"It's often paid for by the community at large," Menke said.

"We have stations at shopping centers such as The Village of Rochester Hills, and the power is paid for by the shopping center owner. They believe that it makes their location that much more attractive to EV drivers."

Menke said it usually takes at

least 20 minutes to charge an EV car. So while the driver waits for his vehicle to charge, he can go shopping. The charging station becomes an incentive to stay at the shopping center.

Janice Means, associate professor from LTU's College of Architecture and Design, is the chair of this year's SOS (Seminar On Sustainability) conference at the school, which was taking place on the day of the dedication.

"There were plans to install a station and I decided to coordinate

its placement to coincide with our conference," Means said.

"We see this station as part of getting ahead of the curve. It's a case of, 'If you build it, they will come.'"

"With a charging station on campus, it will encourage staff and students to invest in EV cars."

Filza Walters, director of Architectural Engineering at Lawrence Tech, said the charging station helps send the message that Lawrence Tech is "the" technological university in Southeast Michigan.

Students Stage 2012 a Version of Northwood University Auto Show

MIDLAND, Mich. – A free vehicle checkup event was one of the highlights of the 2012 Northwood University International Auto Show (NUIAS) Oct. 5-7.

Hosted by the Car Care Council in the parking lot of H.H. Dow High School, the checkup included the Council's staff discussing how to be "Car Care Aware." They also distributed free car care guides to attendees.

The three-day event provided a learning experience for students as well as the opportunity for more than 45,000 visitors to interact, view and become educated about the more than 500 product offerings presented by more than 600 students of all majors at Northwood University.

The Auto Show, which marks its 49th anniversary this year, continued the tradition of allowing students to plan, organize, execute and work the show.

Throughout the weekend, many alumni returned to campus either to display product offerings or visit the show.

"Despite the on-and-off rainy weather throughout the weekend, attendance at the Auto Show was steady as people bun-

dled up and enjoyed the show regardless of the weather, something that students also chose to work through as rain poured for the early part of Thursday's set-up," said Patrick Faber, NUIAS general chair.

Many aspects of the show were different this year with many products having returned and some new vehicles introduced to the show.

The goal for next year's show will be to maintain this year's vendors while also offering new exhibits.

According to Dr. Timothy Nash, vice president for strategic and corporate alliances and Fry-endowed chair in free market economics, "The NUIAS impacts the Midland area with an estimated 2-3 million dollars annually."

"The students of Northwood University should be proud of their hard work, as the experience they take with them is something you could never learn in a classroom."

The event, which takes nearly a full year of preparation, is already under way for next year, which will mark the 50th anniversary of the Auto Show.

White, Silver High on List Of Car Buyers' Preferences

By DEE-ANN DURBIN
AP Auto Writer

DETROIT (AP) – If you bought a new vehicle this year, chances are high it was white or silver.

Twenty-two percent of cars and trucks built for the 2012 model year have white paint, making it the most popular color worldwide. Silver is close behind, at 20 percent, followed by black at 19 percent. Gray and red follow to round out the top five.

White is the most popular color for the second year in a row after overtaking silver in 2011. The annual rankings are compiled by automotive paint supplier PPG Industries Inc., a Pittsburgh-based company that provides paints to General Motors Co., Ford Motor Co., BMW AG and others.

The rankings are skewed somewhat by the large number of pickup trucks on the market. Trucks accounted for 55 percent of North American production in the first eight months of this year, according to Ward's, which compiles automotive data. One in four pickups produced is white because business owners often use them as work trucks and paint logos on them. By comparison, 19 percent of midsize cars made in North America are white.

White, which was also popular in the 1980s, is making a comeback as a modern, high-tech color thanks in part to Apple Inc.'s all-white stores and glossy white gadgets, said Jane Harrington, PPG's manager of color

styling for car companies. Manufacturers are also making more varieties of white, from the flat, bright white on many vans to the pearly cream of luxury SUVs.

Silver also rose in popularity as a high-tech color starting in the 2000s, and remains an especially popular choice in Asia. It remains in vogue because it highlights every angle of a car, Harrington said.

"Silver looks great on any design," Harrington said.

White and other "safe" colors – silver, gray and black – also got more popular during the economic downturn, as buyers stopped leasing and bought vehicles they expected to hold on to for much longer, said Michelle Killen, GM's lead color designer for exterior paints. They were leery of some of the more daring colors on the market, like the magenta available on the Ford Fiesta or the bright orange on the Scion iQ.

"Buyers want to purchase a color they won't grow tired of over an extended period of time," Killen said.

Color preferences vary by geography. You'll find more red vehicles in North America. Black and gray overtake silver in popularity in Europe. Drivers in Asia like tan and gold but not green. Only about 7 percent of cars in every region are blue.

PPG, which also develops paints for cell phones, laptops, airplanes and houses, bases its automotive paints on trends it sees in fashion, interior design and other areas.

Fuel-Saving System Debuts on New 2013 Dodge Dart, Ram 1500 Trucks

AURORA, Ontario, Canada – Magna International Inc. has announced that its Magna Exteriors and Interiors (MEI) operating unit has started production of its Active Grille Shutter (AGS).

The AGS is a louver system that blocks various front-end airflow openings, reducing drag while maintaining optimal engine temperatures.

Reduced drag is a key factor for improving vehicle gas mileage.

Building on the auto industry's initial research into grille shutter systems, MEI developed and commercialized this new product offering in 18 months, a rapid development cycle made possible by the company's expertise as a leading supplier of automotive front-end modules and fascias.

The system's louvers, functioning like household blinds, automatically open and close based on various inputs from the vehicle.

Under conditions that produce moderate engine temperatures – for example, when a vehicle is traveling at highway speeds – the louvers are closed, which directs airflow around the vehicle, re-

ducing drag and enabling fuel efficiency improvements.

For situations such as sitting in hot traffic, traveling uphill or pulling a trailer, the shutters remain open and allow air to flow into the engine compartment for optimal engine cooling.

"Nearly every passenger vehicle introduced in upcoming years will have some kind of active shutter system," said Bob Brownlee, president of Magna Exteriors and Interiors.

"With the development of our Active Grille Shutter, we have been able to quickly meet automakers' rising demand for a well-engineered, high-quality system that helps address rising fuel-economy standards and the need to reduce vehicle emissions."

After making its debut on the 2013 Dodge Dart and Ram 1500 pickup truck, Magna's AGS will be included on four additional upcoming vehicles, with more expected to follow.

Magna's system is applicable for any vehicle segment, including pickup trucks and SUVs, which typically receive the highest benefit in reduced fuel consumption.

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