

Jeep Sales Climb to the Top

The Jeep brand recorded global sales of 701,626 units in 2012, setting an all-time high – bettering the brand's previous annual high of 675,494 units sold in 1999.

Jeep vehicle sales increased 19 percent globally in 2012 versus 2011, and 13 percent in the United States (474,131 units).

"The Jeep brand has achieved double-digit percentage sales increases in each of the past three years, both globally and in the U.S. market," said Mike Manley, president and CEO – Jeep Brand, Chrysler Group LLC.

"In late 2009, we set out on a course to quickly renew our entire vehicle lineup, with a focus on legendary Jeep capability combined with improved on-road driving dynamics, fuel efficiency and world-class craftsmanship. Clearly, customers have appreciated the unique combination of attributes that Jeep vehicles offer.

"We expect to continue our sales momentum in 2013 with the introduction of an all-new mid-size Jeep SUV, as well as the new 2014 Jeep Grand Cherokee, which will be available with a new, clean-diesel engine," Manley added.

In 2012, each major global region recorded increased Jeep sales versus 2011. Specifically, Jeep sales in the Asia-Pacific region rose 94 percent; sales in European markets rose 29 percent; and sales in Latin American markets rose 18 percent. In China –

the largest automobile market in the world – Jeep remains the fastest-growing mainstream brand, with sales up 107 percent in 2012. In the United States, Jeep has regained its number-one position in the SUV market.

Several individual Jeep nameplate records were also set in 2012. Jeep Wrangler enjoyed its best year ever both globally (194,142 units) and in the U.S. (141,669 units); Jeep Compass recorded its best year ever on a global basis (103,321 units); and Jeep Patriot recognized its best U.S. sales year with 62,010 units sold. Jeep Grand Cherokee recorded sales of 154,734 in the U.S. – its best annual total since 2005.

Across the globe, Jeep sales were led by Grand Cherokee (223,196 units), followed by Wrangler (194,142 units) and Compass (103,321 units).

The Jeep brand's sales results in 2012 come on the heels of similar success in 2011 (sales increases of 41 percent globally and 44 percent in the U.S. versus 2010) and 2010 (sales increases of 24 percent globally and 26 percent in the U.S. versus 2009).

To meet consumer demand around the world, all Jeep models are sold outside North America – and all are available in right-hand-drive versions and with gasoline and diesel powertrain options. Chrysler Group LLC sells and services vehicles in approximately 120 countries around the world.

At TRW, Rear Seat Occupant Safety Moves to the Front

Technology to enhance the safety of rear seat passengers has taken on an urgent priority, and TRW Automotive Holdings has made use of the Airbag 2012 show to showcase its advanced occupant restraint technology.

The TRW display served to inform its audience about opportunities to improve rear seat safety.

What's driving the push for new safety technology are more stringent safety standards planned by the Euro New Car Assessment Program (NCAP).

Dirk Schultz, engineering director, TRW Inflatable Restraint Systems, noted in recent years occupant protection for drivers and passengers has improved significantly, mainly due to NCAP regulatory changes.

But the level and sophistication of available safety features on front and rear seats can vary on many vehicles.

"With Euro NCAP planning to introduce a new ratings scheme in 2015 that focuses more stringently on rear seat safety for a wider range of occupant sizes, this situation is about to change," said Schultz.

"From 2015 on, tests will focus on older and larger children who use booster seats (Q6 and Q10 child dummies), as well as smaller and lighter adults (HIII 5 percent dummies)," he said. "To maintain a five-star rating, vehicle manufacturers will have to meet the more stringent standards set for rear seat occupants.

"As a leader in the development and manufacture of airbags and seat belts, TRW is well-placed to support its customers in offering best-in-class rear seat safety."

At the show, the Livonia-based Tier I supplier is exhibiting several innovative solutions, including its Active Buckle Lifter (ABL) seat belt system.

This new system helps users to fasten their seat belts. The enhanced technology is slated to start production on rear seats in 2013 with a yet-to-be-named major European vehicle manufacturer.

Other key technologies TRW is showing at Airbag 2012 include its roof airbag, a rear seat concept as part of TRW's acrylic car display.

The new system is due to start production in 2014 in a front seat configuration, but TRW is already exploring how the technology can be used to further improve protection for rear seat passengers.

Another new system is TRW's Dynamic Locking Tongue (DLT) seat belt innovation, which can help reduce loads on the occupant's chest by clamping the webbing.

The company expects that these kinds of systems can help meet future NCAP requirements for rear seat passenger protection.

"We have several advanced Occupant Safety System (OSS) technologies already in development and production," said Schultz, "that can support our customers in fitting the right technology – be it in front or rear seating positions – to help maintain their desired star rating."

GM, Isuzu Team To Build Pickups

TOKYO (AP) – Isuzu Motors Ltd. and its former shareholder General Motors Co. said last week that they plan to jointly develop new pickup truck models, reviving cooperation with an eye to fast-growing emerging markets. Isuzu and GM issued statements announcing the cooperation, but gave no details.

Tokyo-based Isuzu, a mid-sized automaker specializing in small trucks, commercial vehicles and diesel engines, produces pickup trucks in Thailand and is relatively strong in South-east Asia.

GM and Isuzu first formed an alliance in 1971. GM acquired a 49 percent share of Isuzu in 1999 but dropped that share to 12 percent in 2003. In 2006, GM sold its remaining 7.9 percent share to two Japanese trading companies for \$300 million.



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