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## Ford's May Retail Sales Are Best In Eight Years

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utility posted its best-ever sales month since being introduced 13 years ago – a 26 percent increase with 29,123 vehicles sold last month.

Other Ford sales of cars were up as well. The Fiesta sold 6,693 in May of 2013, a 10.1 percent increase over the 6,080 in sales for May 2012.

The Ford Focus sold 27,186 in May of 2013, a 9.8 percent increase over a year earlier.

Taurus sales saw a slight decline, going from 6,844 in May of 2012 to 6,515 this year. Mustang sales also dropped, going from 10,427 to 8,797.

Edge sales, on the other hand, increased 14.9 percent, going from 11,749 to 13,501. Explorer sales also saw an increase in May vs. May of last year – going from 14,662 to 16,861 for a 15 percent increase.

As America's best-selling pickup, the F-Series had its strongest May sales result since 2005. F-Series' 71,604 sales in May represented a 31 percent increase versus last year and its 22nd straight monthly sales increase.

In May, Lincoln MKZ sales increased 42 percent versus last year. This represents MKZ's best-ever May sales, building on MKZ's best-ever sales month in April.

## GM's Total Sales Increase in May

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industry and General Motors."

GM's truck sales were up 15 percent versus a year ago, including a 23 percent increase for large pickups and a 30 percent increase for large SUVs.

Crossover sales were up 3 percent. Compact crossover sales were up 10 percent and set a monthly record behind the Chevrolet Equinox, which had its best month ever. The Equinox has now posted 17 consecutive monthly sales increases.

Retail passenger car sales were up 2 percent while total sales were down 6 percent. Lower fleet sales were due primarily to the timing of customer deliveries.

Cadillac's 40 percent sales increase marked its best May since 2007. It was the largest year-to-year sales increase since 1976.

(See related story on page 1.)

Chevrolet had its best retail sales month since August 2009.

Retail sales of GM's redesigned medium crossovers were very strong: the Chevrolet Traverse was up 14 percent, GMC Acadia and Buick Enclave up 15 percent and 19 percent, respectively.

Chevrolet sold a total of 179,510 vehicles in May, representing a 0.9 percent increase over May 2012. Of the 179,510 Chevys sold, 124,897 were retail sales, representing a year-over-year increase of 5.4 percent.

Strong Chevrolet Spark sales and double-digit increases for the Buick Verano, Chevrolet Son-

# Chrysler Refuses NHTSA's Request for 2.7M Jeep Recall

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issued along with their refusal-statement, the automaker cited a number of "problems" with NHTSA's analysis, including:

- All vehicles in question exceeded the requirements of NHTSA's FMVSS 301, the agency's own standard by which fuel system design is evaluated in the United States.

- A review of almost 30 years of field data showed an "extremely low" number of rear impact crashes resulting in a fire or fuel leak in a fleet of more than five million of the subject vehicles that have clocked more than 500 billion miles over 50 million registered vehicle years.

- In the vast majority of incidents cited by NHTSA resulting in injuries or fatalities, the crash force "was far in excess of the rear crash fuel leak requirements" in place at the time these vehicles were manufactured, and also more than the requirements in place today.

The company further stated in the White Paper that NHTSA used an "incomplete and unrepresentative" group of vehicles to make comparisons with.

The statement continued: "Data from NHTSA's Fatality Analysis Reporting System show 24 models – none of which has been subjected to recall – are more likely to be involved in a fire-related, rear-impact fatality than the 2002-2007 Jeep Liberty; 54 models are more likely than the 1993-2004 Jeep Grand Cherokee."

And Chrysler further asserts that NHTSA "does not consider all available data," omitting two of its own data sources in NASS (National Automotive Sampling System) when examining the performance of similar vehicles in the same product niche.

Chrysler makes the point in its White Paper that all but one fatal crash involving a Jeep Grand Cherokee, and all but four involving the Liberty were "high-energy crashes," such as one crash cited by NHTSA where a stationary Jeep Grand Cherokee was struck by a tractor-trailer at 65 mph, which resulted in crash energy more than 23 times that of the required performance standard.

ic and Cruze drove a 27 percent increase in sales of mini, small and compact cars.

The Chevrolet Cruze had its best May sales ever, and the Sonic had its best month ever.

Chevrolet dealers delivered more than 2,350 new 2014 Impalas.

Buick retail sales have increased for 13 consecutive months.

Buick sold 17,982 vehicles in May, a decline of 3.1 percent from May a year ago. Buick spokesman Phil Colley said overall Buick sales are up for the year, and the reason for the difference in May sales isn't bad news.

"Last May, we had a large fleet order of Enclaves," Colley said. "That's a big reason for the difference in May vs. May sales. But, overall retail sales are up 16.9 percent calendar year to date, and total Buick sales are up 16 percent calendar year to date."

Year-to-date truck sales were up 12 percent, including a 22 percent increase in sales of large pickups and a 23 percent increase for large SUVs.

GM sold 41,594 vehicles in May of 2013, representing a 7 percent increase over May of 2012. Of those sales, 33,814 were retail, an increase of 11.5 percent compared with last year.

Crossover sales were up 17 percent and car sales were essentially equal to a year ago.

GM's fleet mix was 26 percent, which is in line with the company's full-year strategy.

The Chrysler statement concluded by saying it stands behind the quality and safety of its vehicles and conducts voluntary recalls when they are warranted, "in most cases, before any notice or investigation request from NHTSA," and inviting customers with concerns to contact its Customer Care Line at 877-426-5337.

NHTSA officials remain focused on getting Chrysler to conduct the recall NHTSA believes is necessary to protect consumers.

"The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration is deeply com-

mitted to safeguarding the driving public. Our data shows that these vehicles may contain a defect that presents an unreasonable risk to safety, which is why we took the next step of writing Chrysler.

"The driving public should know that NHTSA is actively investigating this issue and is requesting that Chrysler initiate a safety recall and notify all affected owners of the defect. NHTSA hopes that Chrysler will reconsider its position and take action to protect its customers and the driving public."

NHTSA's analysis studied fatal and non-fatal incidents of rear-impact crashes involving the vehicles named in the recall. According to the agency, there were 15 deaths from 2003 to 2012 resulting from rear-impact collisions in the Jeep Grand Cherokee built on the WJ platform; and 27 fatalities from 1998 to 2012 from incidents involving the ZJ platform Grand Cherokee.

The NHTSA reports that seven people died in rear-impact collisions in the Jeep Liberty (KJ platform) from 2006 to 2010.

## Chrysler Extends Streak of Monthly Sales Gains to 38

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"We have a much more fuel-efficient lineup now, and that's obviously something consumers are demanding," said Kisiel, adding that Chrysler now offers 14 models that achieve a fuel economy rating of 25 mpg or better, and of the 14, six obtain at least 31 mpg.

"We just came out with our new Jeep Grand Cherokee; and we re-did our light-duty and heavy-duty Ram pickups," he said, "so there are a lot of factors that contributed to the sales gains."

In fact, Chrysler reported May sales increases for all of its Jeep brands. The Jeep Compass crossover compact SUV surged 42 percent, its best sales month ever, and the largest sales gain among Jeep brands. Sales of the flagship Jeep Grand Cherokee also went up 21 percent, its best May sales in eight years.

"We continue to see strong retail sales throughout our product lineup as eight Chrysler Group vehicles set sales records in May, including best sales ever by the Jeep Wrangler and Compass," said Reid Bigland, head of U.S. Sales. "Sales of the Jeep Wrangler are



2013 Jeep Compass

incredibly hot," Kisiel said. He added that Chrysler's strides in improving the quality of its vehicles have third parties taking notice, which is also bringing buyers into Chrysler dealerships.

Kisiel cited the recent award recognition by Strategic Vision's annual Total Quality Index (TQI), survey of more than 17,500 owners of 2013 model-year vehicles, with the Dodge Dart compact car and Durango full-size SUV dominating their segment. The

Chrysler Town and Country minivan and the Chrysler 200 also ranked at the top of their respective segments in the survey.

"Four out of five of our brands were up last month, led by the Dodge and Ram brands," Kisiel said.

He added the Fiat brand was up 1 percent, "but the real news is, since we reintroduced the Fiat 500 in March 2011, we've posted 100,000 units sold in North America."

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