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‘Cadillac is Back’ – GM’s Ferguson

Cadillac’s year-to-date sales increase of 38 percent will be the brand’s largest yearly increase since 1976, making the 110-year-old brand the fastest-growing major automotive brand in the U.S., according to Cadillac officials.

The brand’s news for May 2013 was more of the same, with sales up 40 percent compared with May of 2012.

Cadillac’s May increase marks its 12th consecutive month of sales growth.

“Cadillac is back,” said Bob Ferguson, vice president, Global Cadillac. “Our growth is product-driven, new luxury vehicles with dramatic design and performance drawing new customers to showrooms.”

Total Cadillac sales for May 2013 was 13,808. That compares with 9,871 total sales in May of 2012. Total year-over-year sales for Cadillac are up 36.6 percent.

Cadillac brand spokesman David Caldwell added that the circumstances of 2013 are radically different from 1976.

“In 1976, the luxury market had far fewer brands,” Caldwell said.

“There was Cadillac and Lincoln. BMW was probably better known for its motorcycles. Mercedes was a good brand, but its presence in the U.S. was much

smaller. Lexus, Infiniti and Acura didn’t even exist.”

Caldwell said seeing such an increase in today’s luxury marketplace, which is filled with tough competitors from around the world, is especially satisfying.

“It’s so much more impressive to see this growth in the face of such tough competition,” Caldwell said. “The United States market is the most competitive luxury market in the world today. This sales increase goes to the point of why we’re seeing this increase. It’s product-driven.”

Caldwell said that GM’s sales information shows that fully 66 percent of the buyers who recently purchased a Cadillac traded in different makes. That means two-thirds of the buyers weren’t Cadillac owners.

“We have other good news as well,” Caldwell said. “About 20 percent of ATS buyers are under the age of 35. The ATS starting price begins at about \$34,000, so that’s good news especially when you consider that, historically, under-35 buyers accounted for

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



2013 Cadillac ATS



From left, Joe Coppens, WWII veteran Sam Fitante and Josh Kuligowski talk about D-Day at the Arthur Miller branch of the Warren library.

Soldiers Invading Normandy Lugged 100 Pounds of Gear

by Jim Stickford

Sixty-nine years after the Allied invasion of Normandy in France, the Warren Public Library put on a display and presentation of the tools of that day.

In the audience was World War II veteran and Warren resident Sam Fitante, who hit the beaches of France in August of 1944.

On stage were WWII aficionados who showed the audience what a soldier had to carry to complete his mission on the historic June 6 invasion.

Joe Coppens, a computer technician for the St. Clair Shores Public Library, and Josh Kuligowski, an employee of the Beaumont Hospital in Troy, brought their gear to the Arthur

Miller branch of the Warren Public Library and talked about it and how it was used by soldiers on D-Day.

Coppens said that both he and Kuligowski are members of the Michigan Military Technical and Historical Society. They have a museum on Stephens just east of Gratiot in Eastpointe.

“We’ve been with the museum for two years,” Coppens said. “We’ve both been reenacting for the past four or five years. I, myself, have been a collector of military items since I was a little squirt. I would collect anything I could get my grubby hands on at Joe’s Army-Navy store.”

As part of the demonstration,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

Autonomous Technology Will Take Long Time – IIHS’s Zuby

by Jim Stickford

WWJ-Radio got together a panel of experts at the OCC campus in Royal Oak on June 5 to talk about the future of the autonomous car to academics and industry insiders.

Panelist David Zuby, chief research officer for the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS), said things are happening quickly with development of autonomous technology.

Zuby said that in 2004, the Defense Department entity DARPA (Defense Advanced Research Project Agency) held a driverless car challenge and no one completed the course set out on an old Air Force base.

The next year, five companies had tech that could complete the course.

He said Google is getting into the game and, from an insurance perspective, autonomous tech promises to make driving safer.

“A study done in 1970 indicated that nine out of 10 accidents were caused by some sort of driver error,” Zuby said. “And that was in an era when we didn’t have all these electronic distractions.

“About 30 percent of accidents

are caused by people speeding or driving too fast for the road conditions. This technology could really help. We know already that forward collision warning tech reduced accidents by 7 percent.

“This tech, combined with auto braking tech, reduces accidents by 14 percent. This technology will take a long time to become universal.”

Airbags have been required in cars since the 1990s and 12 percent of vehicles on the road

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



Kirk Steudle

Big 3 Sales Continue to Set Records

Every GM Brand Chips in to Raise May Sales Marks

The sales story at GM is large. That’s because sales of large pickups and large SUVs – along with Cadillacs – helped GM to another total company sales increase.

GM sold 252,894 vehicles in the United States in May, up 3 percent compared with a year ago. Retail sales increased 9 percent, fleet sales were down 10 percent and the fleet mix was 26 percent of total sales.

“Cadillac is growing faster than it has in almost 40 years, the pickup rebound is in full swing and we’re seeing strong retail demand for our crossovers,” said Kurt McNeil, vice president of U.S. Sales Operations. “These are all powerful signs that the gradual recovery in the economy is becoming more broad-based. That’s great news for the auto 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. Low-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Ford’s May Retail Sales Are Best In Eight Years

Led by Fusion, Escape and F-Series trucks, Ford Motor Company’s U.S. sales grew 14 percent in May 2013, with cars up 9 percent, utilities 15 percent and trucks 18 percent.

Retail sales increased 17 percent, marking the best May retail sales results since 2005.

“Our fuel-efficient Fusion and Escape have set monthly sales records for four straight months,” said Ken Czubay, Ford vice president, U.S. Marketing, Sales and Service. “F-Series sales – fueled by construction growth and pent-up demand – reached their highest level in more than six years.”

Fusion posted its best-ever May sales of 29,553 vehicles – with its strongest areas of sales growth in the Western and Southeastern areas of the U.S.

The fuel-efficient Escape small 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.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Chrysler Extends Streak of Monthly Sales Gains to 38

Buoyed by robust sales gains for its Ram Truck and Jeep brands, Chrysler posted a May sales increase of 11 percent, compared with May 2012.

Chrysler spokesman Ralph Kiesel confirmed that Chrysler enjoyed its best May sales since 2007, and last month’s stellar sales performance extended the Auburn Hills-based automaker’s streak of year-over-year sales gains to 38 consecutive months.

Eight Chrysler vehicles set sales records in May. Kiesel said sales for the Ram Truck brand surged 24 percent year-over-year in May, closely followed by demand for Dodge brand vehicles, with sales up 23 percent year-over-year.

Kiesel cited the company’s improved technology – resulting in better fuel economy – and its product quality gains.

“We have a much more fuel-efficient lineup now, and that’s obviously something consumers are demanding,” said Kiesel, 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 redid 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

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

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