

# Heavy Winter Blues Strike GM and Its Dealerships

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cluded Chevrolet sweeping the North American Car and Truck of the Year awards with the Silverado and Corvette Stingray.

The Chevrolet Cruze and Cadillac SRX had their highest-ever January sales, Cain said.

Retail sales of Chevrolet cars were up 8 percent led by gains for the Sonic, Malibu, Impala and Corvette. Retail deliveries of the Buick Regal and Encore were also up.

Deliveries to commercial fleet customers, which are about 24 percent of total fleet sales, were up 17 percent. GM's commercial fleet business has now posted sales increases in each of the last three months.

The all-new 2015 Chevrolet Tahoe and Suburban, and the GMC Yukon and Yukon XL, began shipping to dealers in late January.

Historically, January is the industry's lowest sales month of the year, Cain said. Extreme win-

ter weather in the South, Midwest and Northeast this January further depressed GM and industry sales. The seasonally adjusted annual selling rate (SAAR) for light vehicles is expected to be an estimated 15.3 million units, down from 15.6 million in December.

Cain said GM expects light vehicle sales for the year to be in a range of 16 million to 16.5 million units, which would be the industry's best year since 2007, when 16.2 million vehicles were sold. GM expects to earn modestly higher market share in this environment.

GM, Cain said, also expects to grow its commercial fleet business in 2014, thanks to the ongoing launches of the all-new Silverado and GMC Sierra heavy-duty pickups, and the fall launches of the Chevrolet City Express small van, and the Chevrolet Colorado and GMC Canyon midsize pickups. GM expects deliveries to rental companies to be similar to 2013.

## GM Engineers Learn from Customers

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Bailey, Corvette chassis systems engineer.

"It gives me new perspective on what I do every day, like things I need to put more focus on that can help our dealers and improve the customer experience."

After the engineers visit the dealerships, they go to Walt Disney World in Orlando, Fla., where they study behind the scenes to learn how the world's No. 1 resort destination conducts customer relations and earns its high marks for customer satisfaction.

PDA program participants have shared some 2,000 observations so far.

Actionable findings go to Product Development, Manufacturing, Marketing and other functions capable of making specific changes, such as:

Handling service information

and creating better communication between design, service engineering and brand quality to simplify dealer service and maintenance procedures while making documentation more accurate;

Balancing product simplification and customer choice while reducing the number of service parts;

Designing vehicle infotainment systems with alternate interfaces that still provide the connectivity and flexibility in Chevrolet MyLink, Buick/GMC IntelliLink and Cadillac CUE systems.

"As a whole, the program enables our engineers to really understand what our customers want and what goes into selling a car," said John Calabrese, GM vice president of Global Vehicle Engineering.

"Ultimately, this experience will enable us to design, build and sell even better vehicles," he said.



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