

GM and Chrysler Employees Help Rebuild Communities

by Jim Stickford

A journey of a thousand miles begins with one step. And fixing up Detroit begins with one neighborhood at a time.

At least that's the belief of Chris Lambert, founder of Life Remodeled, a nonprofit organization that goes into Detroit neighborhoods and helps beautify the area, said group spokesman Tom Beaman, a retired GM public relations executive.

Beaman said the work is done by people in the neighborhood who are helped by volunteers from different organizations and businesses. This year, the neighborhood being beautified is Osborn, which is centered around Osborn High School, located at Hoover and Seven Mile in Detroit.

The work done around Osborn took place between Aug. 3 and Aug. 9.

"GM is one of our largest contributors, not only in terms of money, but also in terms of people," Beaman said. "This week they are providing about 3,700 people to work in beautification of the Osborn neighborhood."

The work done by the volunteers, Beaman said, included mowing lawns of abandoned homes, pulling weeds, boarding up houses, remodeling homes and clearing brush that can be used to hide people.

Part of making a neighborhood better, Beaman said, is doing things like that. Sometimes children are afraid to go to school because they fear people are lurking in the bushes. Taking

away places for miscreants to hide can do a lot to improve a neighborhood.

And Life Remodeled also help remodel Osborn High School itself. Among the work done was

the construction of a new library/computer room, which was filled with donated computers.

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GM engineers Trevor Hall, Cas Mulka and Javad Katibai at work in Detroit helping beautify a neighborhood.

Luxury Cars and SUVs Lead The Way to July Sales Jump

by DEE-ANN DURBIN
AP Auto Writer

DETROIT (AP) – American drivers want to get noticed again.

SUVs and luxury vehicles are selling fast, defying recession-era predictions that Americans would downsize and stop flaunting their wealth.

Luxury sales were up 10 percent in the first six months of this year. In the same time period, mass-market vehicle sales rose just 3 percent, according to car shopping site TrueCar.com.

That demand drove July's strong U.S. vehicle sales. Sales of new cars and trucks were expected to rise 3 percent to nearly 1.5 million.

General Motors and Fiat Chrysler both saw 6 percent sales gains over last July, while Honda and Nissan saw 8 percent gains.

Ford's U.S. sales rose 5 percent. Volkswagen sales rose 2 percent. Toyota's sales were flat, hurt by a big dip in car sales.

Automakers benefited from relatively low gas prices and surging sales of SUVs. Sales of Nissan's new Rogue jumped 51 percent, while sales of GM's Buick Encore jumped 68 percent.

Summer discounts to clear out 2015 models also lured buyers. Sales of midsize sedans have been struggling as Americans pass them over for small SUVs, so automakers enticed buyers with zero percent financing deals on the Toyota Camry, Ford Fusion, Nissan Altima and other sedans. It worked. Altima sales

rose 27 percent and set a new July record.

Another big motivator: status. Luxury brands made up 11.5 percent of vehicles purchased so far this year, up from 10.2 percent three years ago, according to TrueCar.

Audi saw its best July ever in the U.S., with sales up 21 percent to more than 17,500 cars and SUVs.

Lincoln's sales jumped 21 percent. The brand sold 785 Lincoln Navigator SUVs, or 25 per day, at more than \$62,000 apiece. Acura and Infiniti sales both climbed 20 percent.

Luxury brand sales have been growing faster than mass-market ones since 2013, but the pace is accelerating for several reasons, says Larry Dominique, TrueCar's executive vice president.

Luxury automakers are adding more models at lower prices, which is attracting new buyers. Mercedes' CLA sedan, introduced in 2013, starts at \$31,500, while Lexus has a new small SUV, the NX, that starts at \$34,480. That's within reach of younger buyers.

Dominique said Millennials are now leasing luxury cars at a higher rate than other generations.

Before the recession, Dominique said, when housing values were high, the industry believed luxury sales were inflated because people were borrowing against their home values. But that wasn't the case.

After the recession, luxury sales took off even before home values had recovered.

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2015 Buick Regal



2015 Ford Explorer



2015 Jeep Wrangler

Cooper-Standard Helps MCC Help U.S. Veterans

The Manufacturing Institute and the Cooper Standard Foundation entered into a partnership in support of veterans to obtain manufacturing jobs in Michigan. The Cooper Standard Foundation supports veteran training programs that will assist veterans to prepare for civilian manufacturing at community colleges across Michigan. Macomb Community College was announced as the first college partner, with additional colleges across Michigan to be included over time.

Funds raised through the Careers for Veterans 200 Race, which will be at Michigan International Speedway on Aug. 15, will aid veterans in manufacturing training programs, said MCC spokeswoman Jeanne Nicol.

Veterans attending MCC have access to fast-track training in a range of manufacturing programs, including welding, manufacturing technology, machining, robotics, and mechatronics, that are linked to more than 600 employers in southeast Michigan. Funding from the Cooper Standard Foundation will provide help for veterans in these programs with transition services, retention support and employment search.

Ford Donates Vehicles for Veteran's Groups

Ford Motor Company is donating seven Ford Flex utility vehicles to Disabled American Veterans (DAV).

The vehicles will become part of the DAV Transportation Network that enlists volunteer drivers to take sick and disabled veterans to VA medical centers across the country, said Ford spokesman Todd Nissen.

They will be deployed to DAV locations in Little Rock, Ark., Iowa City, Iowa, Iron Mountain, Mich., Omaha, Neb., Portland, Ore., Salt Lake City, Utah and Seattle. Since 1996, Ford has donated 199 vehicles to the DAV fleet.

"Transportation and community service are two important areas where Ford excels," said Jim Vella, president, Ford Motor Company Fund and Community Services. "We are proud to be able to help these heroes of freedom get the critical services they need to make their lives better."

In addition to the new Ford Flex vehicles, Ford Fund, the philanthropic arm of Ford Motor Company, is sponsoring DAV 5K walks this fall in cities of Atlanta, Cincinnati and San Diego.

Ford Fund also is continuing support for the Jesse Brown Memorial Youth Scholarship Program, which provides scholarships to deserving young men and women who have generously volunteered their time to help disabled veterans in their community.

"We are extremely proud of our long partnership with Ford Motor Company," said DAV National Commander Ron Hope.

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Automotive Radio Security Hacking Called ‘Unique’

by TOM KRISHER
AP Auto Writer

DETROIT (AP) – The company that makes car radios that friendly hackers exploited to take control of a Jeep Cherokee says its other infotainment systems don’t have the same security flaw.

Harman International CEO Dinesh Paliwal said last week that the hackers used a cellular connection to get to the radio, which they used to control critical functions such as brakes and steering.

The hack by twitter security expert Charlie Miller and Chris Valasek, who heads auto security for a consulting firm, touched off the recall of 1.4 million vehicles from Fiat Chrysler to patch software holes. On Saturday, the government announced that it would investigate the Harman Kardon radios to see which other manufacturers use them and whether they had the same vulnerabilities.

The hackers, who informed Fiat Chrysler of their findings, were able to control the Jeep remotely with a laptop computer, sending the auto industry scrambling to make sure its systems are secure. They were to release specifics about their attack at a hackers’ conference in Las Vegas last week.

But Paliwal said the radio system that was hacked, with an 8.4-inch touch screen, was developed about five years ago and doesn’t have as many security safeguards as current models. “We believe, based on our assessment with all other customers, we supply our system so that the Chrysler system is the only one exposed to this particular experimental hack,” Paliwal said on the company’s fiscal fourth-quarter earnings conference call. “So it’s a unique situation.”

The hackers, he said, were able to get from cellular connection into the radio and then to a network that handles commands for critical functions.

“Once you go through an open port in a network, it’s like leaving a door open in a secure house,” he said. “Once you get in, then you can mimic as if you are one of the authorized messengers, you start to send messages.”

Miller and Valasek released some of their findings last week, but Paliwal said Harman was told about the hack late last year and worked with Fiat Chrysler on a software fix.

GM and Chrysler Employees Help Rebuild a Community

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

“We select neighborhoods based on need,” Beaman said. “This is a blighted neighborhood, but there’s also hope. Osborn has, in the past few years, adopted new programs and seen its graduation rate go from 40 percent to 80 percent.”

Lambert said Life Remodeled started as a group in April of 2011 and it was based on an idea he had a year earlier. He is 35 years old and was a pastor of a small blue collar church he started in Westland.

“We work on one project a year,” Lambert said. “And every year we work to help a different neighborhood and make a long-term commitment to that neighborhood. What we do in Detroit is a combination of need and hope. I don’t believe there is such a thing as a hopeless neighborhood in Detroit. Rather, some neighborhoods haven’t yet discovered the hope that they have.”

Noel Moore is a project manager for Global Standardization for Fiat Chrysler. He and several of his colleagues volunteered their time to help with the beautification efforts.

“We clear trash out of yards, ripping out bushes and removing



Fiat Chrysler employees clean up a yard in Detroit.

debris,” Moore said. “We’re doing this a few blocks from the school, trying to clean up the area.”

Jennifer DuCharme, a data analyst for Fiat Chrysler, said the company encourages its employees to donate at least 18 hours of their time every year to worthy causes. She and her colleagues became involved in Life Remod-

eled two years ago.

“This is something that’s worth doing,” DuCharme said. “It takes a lot of work, but Fiat Chrysler has a lot of people available to get the job done.”

For some engineers at GM, donating their time to Life Remodeled gives them a chance to get their hands dirty, literally.

Engineers Trevor Hall, Cas Mulka and Javad Katibai were among the GM employees who helped board up and remodel homes in the area around Osborn High School. These days engineers spend more time inputting numbers into a computer instead of working with their hands.

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GM Tech Center Receives Its Historical Marker

With officials from the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service and Michigan Historic Preservation Office on hand, General Motors on Aug. 6 unveiled a 5-foot-tall, 1,200-pound bethel white granite marker of its Technical Center's selection as a National Historic Landmark.

The National Park Service selected the campus for the honor because it possesses national significance as one of the most important works of famed architect Eero Saarinen.

The dedication of the marker, which required a crane and several people to guide it into place, also was attended by Executive Vice President of Global Product Development, Purchasing and Supply Chain Mark Reuss and Vice President of GM Global Design Ed Welburn.

"When the GM Tech Center was dedicated in 1956, it was the pinnacle of engineering, design and advance technology," Reuss said. "We recently announced a \$1 billion investment that will bring new construction, significant renovation and 2,600 new jobs to the campus," he said. The expansion of the Tech Center will continue his original design style.

The Tech Center was nominated for landmark status in 2011 by the Michigan State Historic Preservation Office. The application was handled by Preservation Design Partnership (PDP), a Philadelphia architectural practice specializing in planning and design services for historic sites.

PDP's nomination application talked about how the GM Technical Center, designed by Eero Saarinen is an icon of mid-century modern architecture and planning. It contains 25 main buildings on over 600 acres, and is currently home to over 15,000 GM engineers and designers.

PDP went on to say that the idea for creating the GM Tech Center was conceived by Alfred P. Sloan – the president, CEO and Chairman of General Motors – and one of his closest collaborators, Charles Kettering, who was in charge of research at GM.



New historic marker.

PDP called Sloan a "visionary automotive executive and organizational genius, Sloan believed that the long-term prosperity of GM would be based on careful, deliberate and orderly planning of product lines that the corporation would offer to consumers, all based on collaboration of research, engineering, manufacturing and design. Sloan also understood the value of great design, and recruited Harley J. Earl, the legendary designer, who eventually became responsible for several iconic GM vehicles including the world-famous Corvette."

PDP stated that at Earl's urging, Sloan embraced the notion that the new Technical Center should meet the highest aesthetic standards of the age, and Earl was placed in charge of selecting an architect for the project. The firm of Saarinen & Swanson was selected in 1945 as the lead architects for the project, and a scheme was approved by GM.

The work was placed on hold due to post-World War II shortages and a strike, and was not reactivated until 1948. By then Eliel Saarinen was seriously ill and his son Eero had taken over the firm. Eero subtly reworked the design approach, creating a high-style Modernist vision for this groundbreaking project.

"The GM Tech Campus is probably the first corporate campus to bring together the key areas of an automotive corporation, responsible for the creation of new products," PDP wrote in the application. "Saarinen's vision was pioneering, creating a truly modern environment designed by his firm, from the overall planning conception and composition and the architectural expression of the buildings to the iconic interior spaces and finishes, custom furniture, hardware and signs. Sculptures and paintings were



Patricia Trap of the National Parks Service helps Ed Welburn and Mark Reuss unveil an historic marker.

provided by modern artists and GM's designers. "The campus was dedicated in 1956 and was recognized, from the point that its first buildings were complete in 1950, as a pioneering work of planning and as an architectural masterpiece: a

modern campus to allow advanced technology and high-end design to achieve their maximum potential in an inspiring environment."

Ground for the Tech Center was broken in 1949. Construction was completed in 1955.

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Continental Plastics Develop Lighter Panels for Corvette

The 2016 Corvette will use a new product developed by Auburn Hills-based Continental Structural Plastics (CSP), a manufacturer of lightweight composite solutions.

The product, called TCA Ultra Lite, is now in production at one of the company's facilities in Ohio.

"CSP has been associated with the Corvette in one form or another for the past 40 years," said CSP spokeswoman Kim Zitny. "We are replacing out old mid-density material with a light-density material. The old material was called TCA Lite. TCA stands for Tough Class A. The new material is called TCA Ultra Lite."

Zitny said the use of TCA Ultra Lite, a Class A body panel material, results in a 20 lb weight savings on the Stingray Coupe model. This is the first production use of CSP's Ultra Lite advanced composite.

"TCA Ultra lite has been in development for a couple of years," Zitny said. "We knew we had a good lightweight material, but we thought we could come up with a new material that could go head-to-head with aluminum in terms of weight and strength. The final result is TCA Ultra lite."

Through a joint continuous improvement effort, Zitny said that Chevrolet and CSP have significantly reduced the density of the Corvette body panels - from 1.9 specific gravity for the 2013 model year, to 1.6 specific gravity for the 2014 model year to 1.2 for the 2016 model year, said Christopher Basela, lead engineer for Corvette Body Composites.

The mass savings afforded by TCA Ultra Lite, Zitny said, is accomplished through the use of a CSP-patented technology that uses treated glass bubbles to re-

place some of the Calcium Carbonate filler, resulting in a lighter density material. On the C7, a total of 21 body panel assemblies, including doors, decklids, quarter panels and fenders, are molded from TCA Ultra Lite.

"In materials engineering, shaving a single pound per car is a significant accomplishment, so saving 20 pounds per car is monumental," said Tadde Juechter, Corvette chief engineer. "This is a great example of how Chevrolet is continually looking for innovations that improve performance on Corvette, and could benefit possible future applications."

When combined with CSP's patented vacuum and bonding manufacturing processes, Juechter said TCA Ultra Lite offers a premium Class A finish with paint and gloss qualities comparable to metals, including aluminum. The material is able to withstand the E-coat process, and passes all OEM paint tests. It also offers reduced costs at all volumes - and for production volumes under 150,000, tooling costs for composites can be as much as 50 to 70 percent less than those for stamping steel or aluminum.

"We have been working closely with GM to launch this patented, weight-saving technology on the iconic Corvette, achieving this conversion with no changes in material thickness or tooling while maintaining the superior surface finish required for this premium vehicle," said CSP chairman and CEO Frank Macher. "With this successful launch, we can say TCA Ultra Lite is proven to offer several advantages over aluminum, and is truly the next generation of lightweighting technology for the automotive industry."



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2016 Colorado Looking Good For Truck Buyers

Having a well-engineered pick-up truck is only the beginning for GM. The company also wants to give its customers some style along with the engineering.

On the street or on the trail, the 2016 Chevrolet Colorado's Midnight Edition and Z71 Trail Boss bring bolder choices to customers looking to make a visual statement with their truck, said GM spokesman Otie McKinley.

The special editions roll into Chevrolet dealerships this fall, McKinley said, with distinctly tailored appearances that blend custom design cues with Colorado's popular options and accessories. The Midnight Edition is meant to evoke the aesthetic of an urban tuner vehicle, while the Z71 Trail Boss is designed for terrain where the pavement ends.

"These are aggressive editions of one of the country's hottest-selling truck, demonstrating the personalization that's possible with Chevrolet accessories, whether it's for the street, trail or both," said Tony Johnson, Colorado marketing manager. "As the Colorado continues to win over new customers, the new Midnight Edition and Z71 Trail Boss give them more choices and build on segment-leading capabilities and efficiency."

Echoing the blacked-out design theme introduced on the popular Silverado Midnight Edition, the 2016 Colorado Midnight Edition casts an imposing stance, Johnson said. Offered exclusively in black, additional exterior details such as the grille, the bowtie emblem and the 18-inch aluminum wheels are also finished in black.

Additional content includes a spray-on bedliner and soft, folding tonneau cover – both in



The 2016 Chevrolet Colorado Midnight Edition and Trail Boss

black, of course – and Chevrolet-logo sill plates, Johnson said.

The Colorado Midnight Edition is available on LT models with the extended and crew cab bodies, in 2WD or 4WD, and with the 2.5L and 3.6L engines. It will also be available with the all-new 2.8L Duramax turbo-diesel engine. Pricing will be announced later.

Johnson said the 2016 Colorado Z71 Trail Boss builds on the capability of Chevrolet's Z71 off-road truck suspension package with more aggressive tires and off-road-inspired appearance enhancements.

An all-new sport bar with LED trail lighting makes the new edition of the Trail Boss instantly identifiable. It's complemented by black-finished 17-inch aluminum wheels matched with aggressive Goodyear Wrangler DuraTec 265/65R17 all-terrain tires, bold fender flares and tubular as-

sist steps. It also features a black bowtie grille emblem and a spray-on bedliner, and a set of all-weather floor mats inside the truck.

The Colorado Z71 Trail Boss is available on Z71 models with the extended and crew cab bodies, and in 2WD or 4WD. Like the Midnight Edition, it will also be available with the 2.5L and 3.6L engines, as well as the 2.8L Duramax diesel. Pricing will be announced later.

McKinley said Colorado sales tallied 41,575 for the first six months of 2015, expanding the midsize truck market and driving new truck customers to Chevrolet – particularly in areas such as California and Texas, traditional hotspots for import brands.

Colorado's sales for the first half of the year have outpaced Nissan Frontier by nearly 20 percent.



(from l-r) Ford engineers David Gimby, Arman Sahota and William Euliss

Ford's 'Spider Screen' Keeps The Creepy Crawlers Out!

It's often the little things that cause the biggest problems. And Ford is doing something about that.

Arachnophobes may not know this, but there is a team of Ford engineers who developed an innovative spider screen to keep the creepy crawlers from nesting in Ford vehicles.

You're welcome, said David Gimby, Ford fuel systems engineer.

Cheiracanthium mildei and Cheiracanthium inclusum – more commonly referred to as yellow sac spiders – have been known to nest inside vehicles in North America, causing problems for car owners and automakers alike over the years. Instead of using webs to catch prey, these spiders build cocoon-like webs for shelter and to lay eggs. Their home is dense enough to potentially block fuel vapor lines, which can lead to engine damage and diminished vehicle performance.

Gimby began looking into how to keep spiders out of Ford vehicles back in 1999. Having no background in arachnology, he researched the life and science of spiders and in 2004 Ford produced its first spider screen, which has kept spiders from nesting inside Ford vehicles for years.

"These particular Arachnids are not sedentary – they are hunters and constantly roaming," Gimby said. "When it's time to build a birthing cocoon or an over-winter cocoon, they seek a cavity or a depression, like a fuel vapor line opening, which allows them to maximize the use of their silk."

"Spiders can be a nuisance for our vehicle owners. We studied these species to discern how they nest, then designed an effective device for excluding the larger, problematic spiders from nesting in our cars."

The technology continues to

evolve. Ford engineers worked on an improved spider screen that is being implemented across the Ford lineup in North America. It will go global with the launch of the all-new 2016 Ford Focus RS.

Keeping fuel vapor lines clear is key to air and vapor circulation for a vehicle's carbon canister, where fuel vapors are captured so they don't enter the environment, Gimby said. The Ford-developed spider screen keeps spiders out of the line, but allows air and vapor flow for optimal vehicle operation.

"We are constantly improving and adapting, even when it comes to technologies that are already working," said William Euliss, Ford fuel systems engineer. "There is a significant amount of engineering that goes into every detail of our vehicles, like the spider screen."

Ignition Switch Death Toll at 124

DETROIT (AP) – General Motors' faulty ignition switches were responsible for at least 124 deaths and 274 injuries, according to the special fund set up to compensate families of the victims.

The fund, administered by attorney Kenneth Feinberg, updated the totals Aug. 3.

Victims' families are being offered compensation of at least \$1 million each.

The fund has finished processing the 4,342 claims it received by the Jan. 31 deadline.

Of those, 91 percent – or 3,938 – were deemed ineligible.

Feinberg is waiting for additional documentation for six claims.

Fund spokeswoman Camille Biros says 385 compensation offers have been made so far and 275 have been accepted. Five have been rejected.

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GM to Invest \$877 Million In Flint Assembly Body Shop

Everything old is new again.

General Motors' oldest assembly plant in North America, a popular destination for pickup truck customers who want to watch their vehicles being built, will undergo transformation in the coming years.

GM officials on Aug. 4 laid out plans to invest \$877 million to build a new body shop for the Flint Assembly plant, locating it closer to the Flint Metal Center, which supplies sheet metal and other parts used in the Chevrolet and GMC full-size pickups produced in the assembly plant.

The investment will also cover improvements to the general assembly area inside Flint Assembly, as well as retooling and the installation of new equipment at the plant, said GM spokesman Bill Grotz.

"This investment will allow us to use a more innovative approach to deliver material between two critical facilities, reducing handling and the time it takes to ship parts," said Cathy Clegg, GM North America Manufacturing and Labor Relations vice president.

Since 2011, GM has announced investments topping \$1.8 billion for Flint Assembly, Grotz said. This includes \$600 million for plant upgrades and a new stand-alone paint shop that is under construction and slated to open in 2016. Work on the 883,000-square-foot body shop is expected to begin in the first half of 2016, with completion slated for 2018.

"In the last several years, GM's investments in the city of Flint have topped \$2.5 billion, creating hundreds of construction jobs and an economic boost for the community," said

Flint Mayor Dayne Walling.

"This investment not only strengthens the ties between GM and the city, it demonstrates that Flint continues to play an important role in the resurgence of manufacturing in Michigan and the rest of the United States."

Opened in 1947 as part of a post-World War II building boom, GM's Flint Assembly has produced more than 13 million vehicles. The plant's "View Builds," as they are called, allow customers to see their heavy-duty Silverados or heavy-duty Sierra trucks being assembled and roll off the line after a series of quality checks by members of UAW Local 598.

"While the plant has received numerous awards for initial quality and long-term durability and reliability, our latest investments in the plant will raise the bar in vehicle quality and customer satisfaction," Clegg said.

For starters, when the new paint shop opens in 2016, trucks will be painted using a wet-coat process that results in a smoother, more durable finish, Clegg said. The new body shop will be constructed north of the Flint Metal Center, reducing transportation time and handling between facilities.

"This announcement is due to the hard work and dedication of our UAW members in Flint," said UAW Vice President Cindy Estrada, who leads the UAW GM Department.

"This proves once again that when we work together in a collaborative approach, UAW members continue to come up with innovative ways to grow the business, which provides jobs and improves the quality of the products we produce."

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Luxury Cars and SUVs Lead The Way to July Sales Jump

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

“People who buy luxury want luxury. It’s a cultural phenomenon,” Dominique said.

Increases in the stock market have fueled luxury sales. Low interest rates have also helped some luxury buyers lower their monthly lease or loan payments.

Here are more details, by automaker:

- GM’s sales rose 6 percent to 272,512. Buick sales jumped 18 percent, but Cadillac sales were down. GMC and Chevrolet sales were up thanks to demand for trucks. Chevrolet Silverado pickup truck sales were up 34 percent in July.
- Ford’s sales were up 5 percent to 222,731. F-Series pickup sales, which had been down due to lack of inventory as a new truck went into production, were up 5 percent. But Ford’s car sales fell 4 percent.
- Fiat Chrysler’s sales rose 6 percent to 178,027. Jeep sales increased 23 percent and Ram sales rose 1 percent, but Dodge and Fiat sales were down.
- Toyota’s sales were up less than 1 percent to 217,181. Sales of the Tacoma small pickup

jumped 29 percent, while Lexus SUV sales were up 28 percent thanks to the new NX small SUV. But car sales were down. Prius hybrid sales dropped 13 percent.

- Honda’s sales rose 8 percent to 146,324. Honda’s SUV and truck sales jumped 13 percent, led by the CR-V SUV and the Odyssey minivan. Honda’s car sales were up 3 percent.
- Nissan’s sales rose nearly 8 percent to 130,872. Nissan said sales of its trucks and SUVs set a new July record, but low gas prices took a toll on the electric Nissan Leaf, which saw sales drop 61 percent.
- Volkswagen’s sales rose 2.4 percent to 31,300 vehicles. Sales of the new Golf and Jetta sedans more than doubled over last July.

Fiat Chrysler Has Mixed News for Second Quarter

DETROIT (AP) – Net income at Fiat Chrysler’s U.S. operations fell 3 percent last quarter due largely to a \$90 million charge to pay government penalties for mishandling recalls.

The company says it made \$598 million from April to June, compared with \$619 million a year ago. The decline included a \$71 million loss from paying off \$2.9 billion in secured notes.

The drop came even though worldwide sales rose 5 percent to 762,000 for the quarter, including a 6 percent increase in U.S. retail sales to individual buyers.

Revenue for the quarter rose nearly 11 percent to \$22.6 billion, mainly because of higher global sales and prices.

CFO Richard Palmer said the Jeep brand had its best quarter ever with global sales up 47 percent from a year ago to 316,000. Jeep, which sells only SUVs, is benefiting from the global popularity of the higher-sitting vehicles in the past year.

The quarter’s pretax profit margin for the unit, known as FCA US LLC, were 6 percent, up from 4.8 percent a year ago. In late July the parent company, Fiat Chrysler Automobiles NV, reported that its North American pretax margin had hit 7.7 percent. Palmer said margins were lower because they included lower-profit international sales and because of differences between U.S. and international accounting standards. Profit margins are the percentage of revenue that a company keeps.

The recall charge came from a consent agreement announced last month with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. The company was assessed a record \$105 million penalty for recall problems including delays in notifying customers, distributing parts and telling NHTSA of problems. It must pay a \$70 million civil fine, plus make \$20 million in safety-related improvements. It would have to pay another \$15 million if it violates the agreement.

The Italian-American parent company, Fiat Chrysler Automobiles NV, last week raised its outlook for the year due to strong U.S. sales and a European recovery. It reported a net profit for the quarter of \$364 million.

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