



Chevy's Jim Campbell speaks of the importance of the new Powertrain and Performance Racing Center.

Continental Airbag Recall Affects 5 Million

DETROIT (AP) – Another problem has developed with automotive air bags, and this one will bring recalls of up to 5 million vehicles worldwide. Continental Automotive Systems says in documents filed with the U.S. government that moisture can get inside its air

bag control computers, causing the power supplies to corrode and fail. If that happens, air bags may not inflate in a crash or they could deploy without a crash. The documents, posted Feb. 4 on the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration website, said Continental will notify au-

tomakers, who will recall cars dating as far back as 2006. Already Honda, Fiat Chrysler, Volkswagen and Mercedes have issued recalls, and some unidentified Mazda and Volvo Truck vehicles are included. Continental

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2016 Buick LaCrosse

Buick LaCrosse Has 89 Percent Sales Jump

The new year hasn't slowed down GM's sales momentum. The company's Chevrolet, Buick, GMC and Cadillac dealers in the United States delivered 203,745 vehicles in January 2016, the company's best January sales performance in eight years, said GM spokesman Dan Flores. GM's retail sales were up sharply, climbing 9 percent year over year on the strength of a 12 percent increase at Chevrolet and a 45 percent increase at Buick. Total sales were up 0.5

percent, Flores said. "GM began 2016 in very strong competitive position," said Kurt McNeil, GM's U.S. vice president of sales operations. "We built on that momentum in January, with Chevrolet, Buick and GMC outperforming the retail industry by a wide margin. In fact, Chevrolet continues to grow faster than any other full-line brand." Chevrolet gained close to 2 percentage points of retail market share in January, McNeil said, after the brand had the largest

retail market share increase of any full-line brand in 2015. Chevrolet had its best January passenger car retail sales since 1997. The Chevrolet Silverado and GMC Sierra posted a combined 7 percent increase in total sales. GM grew full-size pickup market share faster than all other competitors in 2015, McNeil said. Throughout 2015 and continuing into January, the GMC Sierra, Canyon, Yukon and Yukon XL

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Town & Country Sales Strong in January

Fiat Chrysler reported U.S. sales of 155,037 units, a 7 percent increase compared with sales in January 2015 (145,007 units), and the group's best January sales in nine years, said Fiat Chrysler spokesman Ralph Kisiel. The Jeep, Dodge and Ram Truck brands each posted year-over-year sales gains in January compared with the same month a year ago, Kisiel said. The Dodge brand's 19 percent increase was the largest sales gain of any Fiat Chrysler brand during the

month. The group extended its streak of year-over-year sales gains to 70-consecutive months. "Mother Nature was no match for our Jeep brand last month as we recorded our best January Jeep sales ever," said Reid Bigland, head of U.S. Sales. "Overall, FCA US achieved its best January sales in nine years and our 70th-consecutive month of year-over-year sales increases." Nine Fiat Chrysler vehicles set records in the month of January,

Bigland said, including three Jeep brand vehicles. The Jeep Cherokee, Jeep Patriot, and Jeep Compass; the Dodge Journey crossover, Dodge Challenger, and Dodge Charger; and the Ram pickup truck, Ram ProMaster, and Ram ProMaster City posted their best January sales ever. The Jeep brand continued to set records. Coming off of its best annual sales ever in the U.S. in 2015, the Jeep brand logged its

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2016 Chrysler Town & Country

Lincoln MKX a Sales Winner Last Month

Coming off strong results last January, Ford Motor Company's total U.S. sales of 173,723 vehicles declined 3 percent last month versus a year ago. "Our sales declined modestly by 3 percent, which was consistent, really, with the overall industry," said Ford Sales Analyst Eric Merkle. "But what's more important is we also saw that our average transaction prices grew at almost three times the rate of

the overall industry – so our sales were consistent with the overall industry, but our average transaction prices were growing at a much healthier pace." Bright spots for January include industry-leading transaction price increases for the month, the best start since 2004 for Ford brand SUV sales and an 8-percent gain in sales for Lincoln, Merkle said. "For Ford, overall transaction

prices were up \$1,800 in January – almost three times more than the overall industry average – driven largely by strong customer demand, especially for our SUVs and F-Series pickups," said Mark LaNeve, Ford vice president, U.S. Marketing, Sales and Service. Ford SUVs totaled 50,212 sales last month – a 3 percent increase

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2016 Lincoln MKX

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Jeep's Success Helps FCA January Sales

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best January sales month ever.

The Jeep brand continued its record-setting pace in January, Kisiel said. Jeep brand sales increased 15 percent, the brand's best January sales ever and its 28th-consecutive month of year-over-year sales gains. The Jeep brand has set a sales record in every month dating back to November 2013.

Dodge brand sales were up 19 percent in January, compared with the same month a year ago. It was the brand's best January sales in three years. The brand's 19 percent increase was the largest sales gain of any Fiat Chrysler brand during the month.

The Dodge Challenger, Dodge Charger, and Dodge Journey crossover each posted their best January sales ever. The Dodge Grand Caravan's 83 percent increase was the largest percentage sales gain of any Dodge brand vehicle in the month and its best January since 2007. The Dodge Durango's 70 percent increase was its best January sales performance in 10 years.

The Jeep Cherokee, Jeep Patriot and Jeep Compass each logged their best January sales ever. The Compass' 18 percent increase was the largest year-over-year percentage gain of any Jeep brand vehicle in the month. The Jeep Grand Cherokee's 3 percent increase was its best January sales performance since 2004.

Ram Truck brand sales, which include the Ram pickup, Ram ProMaster, and Ram ProMaster City, were up 5 percent in January, the brand's best January sales since 2004, Kisiel said.

Ram pickup truck sales were up 5 percent in January, its best January sales ever. The pickup is coming off of its best annual U.S. sales ever in 2015 and its sixth-straight year of annual sales growth in the U.S.

Sales of the Chrysler Town & Country minivan were up 39 percent in January, the minivan's best January sales since 2008, Kisiel said.

Sales of the Chrysler 300, the brand's flagship sedan, were up 45 percent for its best January sales performance in three years.

Chrysler brand sales were down 22 percent in January, compared with the same month a year ago.

Continental Airbag Recall Affects Close to 5 Million

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says less than 2 million of the affected vehicles are in the U.S.

Automakers will replace the computers at no cost to owners, according to documents. Honda reported two injuries from the problem.

The announcement comes in the middle of a crisis involving Takata Corp. air bag inflators. About 24 million U.S. vehicles are being recalled for that problem, which is the largest automotive recall in U.S. history.

Takata's inflators can explode with too much force, blowing apart a metal canister and sending shrapnel into the passenger compartment. At least 11 people have died worldwide from the problem, and 139 have been injured.

In the documents, Continental says its problem first surfaced in January 2008 when it analyzed a malfunctioning control unit that was removed from a Mercedes vehicle.

The company continued to investigate, and in early 2011, Continental was told of two inadvertent air bag deployments in Mercedes and Fiat Chrysler vehicles.

Last year, Honda reported two malfunctions in crashes involving 2008 Accords, and U.S. safety regulators began investigating, according to the documents.

Continental said it knows of more than 600 parts that were returned due to the problem.

On the evening of Feb. 3, Honda said it would recall 364,787 2008 to 2010 Accord sedans worldwide because of the issue. The company says the air bags may not inflate in a crash. Honda said it has two reports of people being hurt because the air bags didn't deploy.

On Feb. 4, Fiat Chrysler announced the recall of 112,000 2009 Dodge Journeys and 2008 and 2009 Dodge Grand Caravan and Chrysler Town & Country minivans for the same problem. The Fiat Chrysler recall also includes the 2009 Volkswagen Routan minivan, which was made by FCA. Fiat Chrysler recalled vehicles that do not have Takata air bags.

Last year, Mercedes recalled 126,260 C-Class cars from 2008 and 2009 and 2010 GLK350 vehicles.

The U.S. safety investigation began in August after NHTSA found 19 complaints from drivers

that air bags didn't inflate in crashes of older Honda Accords.

A driver in Belleview, Fla., was injured when his car hit a concrete wall at 50 miles per hour and the air bags didn't inflate, according to one complaint. Several others said the computer had to be replaced and they were charged around \$500.

"This also means that the safety of the vehicle passengers and operators are in jeopardy and potentially face serious injury or death," another complainant wrote. People filing complaints

are not identified in the NHTSA database.

Continental says any malfunction will cause the air bag control computer to shut down, and that will trigger a dashboard warning light.

Honda said it would notify owners about the problem, but repair parts won't be available until fall.

Drivers with an activated supplemental restraint system light should visit a dealer for a repair from the parts on hand, the company said.

Car Condo Track Going Ahead

PONTIAC, Mich. (AP) – The site of a former General Motors factory in Pontiac is being transformed into a private playground for car enthusiasts with a race track and car condominiums.

The Detroit Free Press reports the \$60 million M1 Concourse project is on pace for a June opening.

The project's \$25 million first phase involves construction of a 1.5-mile track and 80 car condos, which are climate-controlled garages that can double as enter-

tainment rooms. Buyers can't live in the condos, but they can sleep over on occasion.

Use of the track would generally be reserved for condo owners and their guests.

Warren's Public Library Hosting Feb. Events

February will be a busy month for the Warren public library, said librarian Jennifer Lund.

On Feb. 18 at 6 p.m. attorney Jocelyn Ward of the Legal Aid and Defender Association will give a divorce law clinic and discuss requirements for divorce, proceedings and timeline, division of marital assets, spousal support, child custody and support, and parenting time. There will be time for questions.

On Feb. 28, at 6 p.m. crime historian and author Tobin T. Buhk will talk about "a few of the more malevolent characters who terrorized Michigan." Lund said. "Come face to face with WWI German spy and Bluebeard, Helmut Schmidt. Featuring these and other killers from Michigan, this program is a must-see for lovers of true crime."

There will also be a book signing. Both events are at the Civic Center branch. Call 586-574-4564 to register.

Takata Airbag Forces Ford Ranger Recall

DETROIT (AP) – Ford is recalling nearly 391,000 Ranger pickups because the driver's air bag inflators can explode with too much force and cause injuries.

The recall covers trucks from the 2004 through 2006 model years in the U.S. and Canada.

It comes just days after the government announced that a South Carolina man was killed when an inflator exploded in December. Joel Knight, 52, of Kershaw died when he was struck in the neck by metal shrapnel after his 2006 Ranger hit a cow in the road and struck a fence.

The government says automakers will recall another 5 million vehicles equipped with faulty inflators made by Takata Corp. of Japan. Some of the re-

calls are because of the crash that killed Knight, with the rest due to air bags failing in lab tests.

Other automakers are expected to announce more recalls soon as the Takata inflator mess continues to grow. It now covers 14 auto and truck makers and totals about 24 million vehicles. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration says the number of recalls is likely to expand further.

Takata uses the chemical ammonium nitrate to cause a small explosion that creates gas and inflates air bags in a crash. But the chemical can deteriorate over time when exposed to high heat and humidity and burn too fast, blowing apart a metal canister designed to contain the explo-

sion. Knight is the 10th known death worldwide due to the inflators, and more than 100 people have been hurt.

Ford says it will send letters to owners about the recall starting the week of Feb. 22. Although it has some replacement parts available, the company is working with air bag makers to make additional inflators as soon as possible, spokesman John Canganay said.

The Rangers also were recalled last year to replace the passenger air bag inflators. Ford says customers can find out if their trucks are included by going to Ford.com and clicking on "safety recalls." Then they can enter their vehicle identification number to check.

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General Motors Builds New Racing Center in Pontiac

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Corvettes. The lessons helped GM find the optimal drag rates and such.

Second, Campbell said, it's an opportunity for GM to develop engineers. They see who is quick on his or her feet and who can solve problems fast or has leadership skills.

Third, Campbell said, it plain builds on GM's image.

"When you win races, it's a fact that you lift opinions," Campbell said. "It puts you on a shopper's list faster."

And fourth, Campbell said, racing fans often get to the track early – hours before a race starts. They look for something to do, and what's better than having a display of Chevy's latest cars showing off the company's winning engines. That generates new leads for the company.

Campbell then introduced to the media Ryan Newman, winner of the 2003 Daytona 500. Newman drives GM engines and even has an engineering degree from Purdue University.

"A facility like this gives us the opportunity to research technology to optimize our advantage over other cars," Newman said. "It gets us closer to the victory lane. I mean we're working with tolerances that are measured in the thousands of the inch. When I started, it was more like a quarter inch."

Russ O'Blenes, senior manager Powertrain Performance and Racing Team, said the new building alone helps them out.

It's configuration is designed to maximize space and ease the transfer of information from department to department. He came to the Pontiac facility from Wixom. Others came from other facilities. Just having them under the same roof helps. Now an engineer can come look at a problem the same day, instead of coming from 2,000 miles away.

GM spokesman Tom Read said that the new, 111,420-square-foot

facility relocates the Racing center from Wixom to the Pontiac Powertrain Campus, bringing together under one roof an additional team of nearly 100 engine builders, engineers and other support staff. The Performance and Racing team is responsible for developing engines for NASCAR, NHRA, IndyCar, IMSA and other racing series.

Tasked with complete racing engine design and validation, the Performance and Racing Center's capabilities include:

- Design release;
- Full CNC machining;
- Engine build;
- Electronics and telematics;
- Dyno validation;
- Calibration.

The racing engines under responsibility at the new center include:

- NASCAR "R07" – a unique 358-cubic-inch V-8 engine;
- IndyCar 2.2L Twin-Turbo V6;
- NHRA COPO Camaro V-8 engines;
- Corvette Racing 5.5L V8;
- Cadillac ATS.VR Twin Turbo.

Additionally, the high-performance crate engines and crate powertrain systems offered by Chevrolet Performance are developed at the new facility, Read said.

Read said the site is a clean-sheet design facility that incorporates the latest engine-assembly, engine-testing and calibration equipment. The connected layouts of the engine assembly and testing areas are designed to enhance workflow, making it easier for the eight dedicated performance and racing engine builders to retrieve parts, build engines and move them to the dyno cells.

Collectively, they bring 150 years of engine-building experience.

Facility highlights, Read said, include:

- Engine assembly. There are 10 all-new engine build bays – eight in the Engine Build room and two in the prep area to facili-



GM has opened up a new racing and component testing center at its Pontiac powertrain facility.

tate quicker transfer to dyno testing and other validation areas.

• Machining. Engineers and builders will also have access to more than 30 machining tools, offering complete machining capability for cylinder blocks, cylinder heads, fuel rails and engine components, comparable to the racing industry's best racing shops.

The equipment roster includes nine CNC machines that can transform designs right into new components – including a new Hurco five-axis machine.

• Engine testing. There are four state of the art AVL engine dynamometer cells dedicated to

the Performance and Racing Center, Read said, including two gas-powered engine dynos, a gas-powered driveline dyno and a new electric driveline dyno.

• Calibration. An electronics lab is used for the design, assembly and calibration of custom control systems that drive most of the racing and performance engines. Engineers are also able to make calibration changes in the dyno cells.

In fact, the dynos can use telemetry data from the race cars' control systems to replay an engine's entire race, which can help with development of new engines and calibration changes for existing ones.

And the interactive lobby and meeting space will be open to the public who might want to take advantage of the beauty and technical aspects for use for a nominal fee, Read said.

The new building's lobby features an airy, modern and connected lobby that celebrates General Motor's motorsports legacy, as well as a conference center that accommodates up to 125 people.

It can be reserved by racing teams, component suppliers and even enthusiast clubs and organizations seeking a meeting location under the checkered flags of GM's racing programs, Campbell said.



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FCA Celebrating Jeep’s Military Origins

Over hill, over dale, over the dusty trail, the original Jeep has a storied history, not just in the auto business, but in the fight for freedom.

The world was at war and the forces of freedom needed a new kind of vehicle to help defeat the forces of fascism. That vehicle turned out to be the iconic jeep.

Born in 1941, the Jeep brand celebrates 75 years of 4x4 leadership, military history, and open-air freedom and adventure in 2016. As a tribute to this diamond anniversary celebration, Jeep is creating distinctive, 75th Anniversary special-edition models of each vehicle in its lineup, said Jeep spokesman Todd Goyer.

“Jeep vehicles have defined the authentic SUV and set the benchmark for off-road capability and freedom since they were first produced in 1941,” said Mike Manley, head of Jeep Brand – FCA Global. “Today, Jeep SUVs continue to deliver 4x4 leadership, as well as fuel efficiency, world-class craftsmanship and premium on-road dynamics.

“In honor of the brand’s 75th anniversary, we have created eye-catching, special-edition models of each vehicle in our lineup that celebrate the unparalleled history of the legendary Jeep brand.”

Goyer said the call for the vehicle that would become known the world over as the jeep first went out in July 1940. The U.S. military informed automakers that it was looking for a “light reconnaissance vehicle” to replace the Army’s motorcycle and modified Ford Model-T vehicles. The Army invited 135 manufacturers to bid on production and developed a lengthy specification list for the vehicle, including the following:

- 600-lb. load capacity;

- Wheelbase less than 75 inches;
- Height less than 36 inches;
- Smooth-running engine from 3 to 50 miles per hour;
- Rectangular-shaped body;
- Four-wheel drive with two-speed transfer case;
- Fold-down windshield;
- Three bucket seats;
- Blackout and driving lights;
- Gross vehicle weight below 1,300 lbs.

At first, Willys-Overland and American Bantam Car Manufacturing Company were the only two companies answering the call, Goyer said. Soon, however, Ford Motor Company entered the picture, and competition began among the three over which company would receive the lucrative government contract. Each company produced prototypes for testing in record time. Bantam’s chief engineer, along with a team of Bantam executives, worked out a design, and the company built its field car within 49 days.

Willys-Overland Vice President of Engineering Delmar G. Roos designed the Willys Quad. Ford developed its Model GP (General Purpose), known as the Pygmy, Goyer said, which was powered by an adapted Ford/Ferguson tractor engine. Each company delivered its prototype to the Army in the summer of 1940 and received approval to build 70 sample vehicles.

The Army took possession of these vehicles in November 1940 at Camp Holabird, Md., Goyer said. Each of the three designs exceeded the Army’s specification of 1,300 lbs., but the Army soon realized that limit was far too low and raised it for the next round of vehicles.

The Army issued the next round of contracts in March 1941, Goyer said. Bantam was to

produce 1,500 Model 40 BRC vehicles, Ford would build 1,500 modified and improved GP Pygmies and Willys would build 1,500 Quads. Further testing and evaluation led to the Army’s selection of Willys vehicle as the primary manufacturer.

Subsequently, most of the Bantams and Ford GPs produced were sent to Great Britain and Russia as part of the lend-lease program, Goyer said. In Great Britain, the Ford vehicle was popularly known as the “Blitz Buggy.”

In his book “Arsenal of Democracy: The American Automobile Industry in World War II”, author Charles K. Hyde wrote that Army Quartermaster “found defects in all three models, but decided that a modified version of the Willys jeep would become the standard design.”

Hyde wrote that in order to facilitate production of as many jeeps as possible, in late 1941 Ford was awarded contracts to build jeeps “exactly the same as the Willys jeep; Willys would provide Ford with a complete set of blueprints, specifications, and parts lists.”

Hyde wrote that one condition of Ford getting the contract was that its jeeps would be built close to port facilities to shorten transportation lines. Ultimately, Ford built 277,896 Jeeps during the war, while Willys made 352,215.

Goyer said the Willys Quad became the MA, and later the MB. But the Army, and the world, came to know it as the Jeep. Some claimed that the name came from the slurring of the letters “GP,” the military abbreviation for “General Purpose.” Others say the vehicle was named for a popular character named “Eugene the Jeep” in the Popeye cartoon strip. Whatever its origin, the name en-



The original jeep was built during World War II.



Famous jeep passengers during the war included U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt

tered into the American lexicon.

The Willys MA featured a gearshift on the steering column, low side body cutouts, two circular instrument clusters on the dashboard and a hand brake on the left side, Goyer said. Willys struggled to reduce the weight to the new Army specification of 2,160 lbs.

Items removed in order for the MA to reach that goal were reinstalled on the next-generation MB resulting in a final weight of

approximately just 400 lbs. above the specifications.

Willys-Overland trademarked the “Jeep” name after the war and planned to turn the vehicle into an off-road utility vehicle for the farm – the civilian Universal Jeep, Goyer said. One of Willys’ slogans at the time was “The Sun Never Sets on the Mighty Jeep,” and the company set about making sure the world recognized Willys as the creator of the vehicle.

VW Submits Diesel Fix Plan

LOS ANGELES (AP) – The Volkswagen Group of America submitted its proposal Feb. 2 to bring Porsches, Audis and Volkswagen cars with six-cylinder, 3.0-liter diesel engines up to California’s air quality standards after state regulators found the vehicles were programmed to emit cleaner emissions on government treadmill tests than on the real road.

The California Air Resources Board confirmed it had received VW’s plan, but the agency will not comment on any details until further review, said David Clegern, a spokesman for the board. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, which is conducting a parallel investigation for violations of federal clean air rules, said it had also received the plan.

The problem affects 85,000 cars with 3.0-liter diesel engines sold nationwide between 2009 and 2015, including some Porsche SUVs and Audis that are sold under the Volkswagen Group umbrella. Between 16,000 and 17,000 of those vehicles are operating in California, Clegern said.

In a statement, Audi spokesman Mark Clothier said the company is cooperating with authorities and hopes to have a

resolution for car owners in the near future.

VW admitted last year to installing so-called ‘defeat devices’ on 2.0-liter diesel engines in some of its most popular models, including the Beetle, Jetta, Golf and Passat.

There are about 500,000 Volkswagen 2.0-liter diesel models on the road in the U.S. affected by that recall.

California regulators last month rejected a similar recall plan for those models as “incomplete and substantially deficient,” prolonging the limbo for VW owners and leaving open the possibility of a buyback program.

Also last month, the U.S. Justice Department, representing the EPA, filed a civil suit that could potentially expose VW to more than \$20 billion in fines under the Clean Air Act. VW could rack up additional civil penalties based on the facts determined at trial.

A separate criminal investigation is under way, and numerous private class-action lawsuits filed by Volkswagen W owners are pending.

A number of states’ attorneys general have also launched probes into the emissions scandal.

PGK Opens Ann Arbor Office

PGK Services is opening a new office located at 3768 Cleary Drive within the Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship at Cleary University in Ann Arbor.

The company will offer staffing solutions such as contract, direct placement, and master vendor services, said said Keith Malec, Director Staffing Services.

PGK specializes in recruitment campaigns customized to yield small to large groups of qualified candidates based upon client needs, Malec said.

“We are excited about the new location as it allows us to further extend services to our current and future client base,” said Malec. “As PGK supports the continuous education and development of our employees, we look forward to forming a relationship with the university as well,” said Malec. PGK will cele-

brate the grand opening of its Howell office with a ribbon cutting ceremony on Feb. 11, at 2 p.m.

“Our strategy for the new location is to be near our current client base in order to provide optimal service and to develop new client relationships within Livingston County,” said CEO and owner Patrick Kirby. “We believe that personalized service, integrity, and commitment are paramount to building and maintaining successful business relationships.”

With its corporate office in Troy, Michigan, the PGK companies offer over thirty years of industry experience, Malec said. PGK Services provides staffing solutions nationally to its clients in the consumer goods, manufacturing, recreational, automotive and industrial markets.

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New Performance Focus Arrives Early Spring

With U.S. sales of Ford’s performance cars outpacing the over-all industry, Ford spokesman Chris Terry said production kickoff for the company’s long-anticipated, 350-horsepower hot hatch Focus couldn’t come at a better time.

The first all-new Focus RS has just rolled off the line in Saarlouis, Germany, Terry said.

The arrival of Focus RS in the United States this spring adds to a potent hot hatch lineup. Ford’s Focus ST and Fiesta ST both have enjoyed critical acclaim and success, Terry said. Sales of the Focus ST increased 9 percent last year while Fiesta ST saw a gain of 4 percent.

The 2016 Focus RS, Terry said, is the latest in a line of iconic cars developed by Ford. Experts in small-car engineering, the Ford Performance Team has consistently pioneered innovative performance technologies including powerful naturally aspirated and turbocharged powertrains, advanced all-wheel-drive systems and a sophisticated aerodynamic design.

Dating back to the early days, Terry said Ford found success in Rallye Sport. That’s also where the first RS models established a reputation for advanced technology and driving exhilaration—and now the RS is coming to a passing lane near you. Here are just a few of the exciting features you’ll find on RS:

- All-Wheel-Drive System. It features the new Ford performance All-Wheel Drive with Dynamic Torque Vectoring, the RS offers the next level in handling capability. To the performance enthusiast, Dynamic Torque Vectoring means maximum traction with minimum understeer. In other words, Focus RS offers stability, cornering speed and a high level of performance.
- Turbocharged EcoBoost Engine. The RS has taken the 2.3L engine to another level with its unique turbocharger, cooling and exhaust. The 2016 Ford Focus RS



2016 Ford Focus RS

is projected to produce 350 horsepower.* That undoubtedly makes this RS the fastest and most powerful vehicle in the production Focus lineup.

• Advanced Performance Technologies. Configure RS performance to your liking, on the street or on the track: Select Normal, Sport, Track, or the special Drift mode control that lets you achieve controlled oversteer drifts under track conditions. These modes adjust settings for shock tuning, stability control, engine and steering response, even exhaust sound.

Activate launch control, then put the pedal to the metal and let out the clutch for exhilarating off-the-line torque with optimum traction, Terry said. The RS brake system features advanced cooling technology — dedicated ducts fed from the front fascia, twin “jet tunnels” in the underbody and airflow guides on the lower suspension arms. The front Brembo™ discs feature aerodynamically optimized ventilation fins for enhanced cooling.

The Ford Performance U.S. lineup, Terry said, is set to grow by three models in 2016. Focus RS will be joined by F-150 Raptor this fall and the all-new Ford GT supercar that goes into production late this year. Along with Fo-

cus ST and Fiesta ST, the lineup already includes Shelby GT350 and GT350R, which debuted late last year.

Focus RS is one of 12 performance vehicles Ford will bring to customers globally through 2020, Terry said. Developed by a team of Ford Performance engineers in Europe and the U.S., Focus RS is powered by a specially engineered version of Ford’s new 2.3-liter EcoBoost engine. Its 4.7-second 0-62-mph sprint makes the high-performance hatchback the fastest-accelerating Ford RS model ever.

Terry said Focus RS pioneers innovative Ford Performance All-Wheel Drive with Dynamic Torque Vectoring for a new level of handling, grip and cornering speed. For the first time, the RS model gets selectable drive modes – including industry-first drift mode that allows controlled oversteer drifts – and launch control.

ROUSH Performance Adds Power to the Ford F-150

Good news for Ford F-150 fans who want a little extra power. ROUSH Performance has launched the 2016 ROUSH F-150 SC, said ROUSH spokesman Gregg Voss. It has a robust” 5.0L V8 engine from the factory, but the addition of the ROUSH TVS 2300 supercharger system bulks up power ratings to an aggressive 600 hp and 557 lb-ft of torque.

The pre-title 2016 ROUSH F-150 SC is now available for purchase at ROUSH dealerships in federal emissions states not governed by the California Air Resources Board (CARB) regulations, Voss said.

And, Voss said, the truck

comes with an industry-leading three-year, 36,000-mile limited warranty.

A ROUSH/Fox 2.0 Performance Series Suspension System, featuring front coil-overs and rear shocks with boots.

That means, Voss said, the 2016 ROUSH F-150 SC is as “tough and nimble off-road as it is on-road.”

And, Voss said, ROUSH 20-inch wheels with beefy Mickey Thompson Baja ATZP3 305/55 tires give the truck a stance that’s second to none. A ROUSH Performance Side-Exit Exhaust System makes the 2016 ROUSH F-150 SC rumble no matter where it’s driven.

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Rhode Island Helps Electric

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (AP) – Rhode Island is offering \$2,500 rebates to encourage residents to buy or lease plug-in cars, joining a growing number of states inviting drivers to go electric.

Only about 450 electric-powered vehicles are on the roads of the nation’s smallest state, far fewer than in neighboring Massachusetts – where nearly 5,500 are registered – or Connecticut, which has about 1,400.

“We’re a little behind some of our fellow New England states that have been national leaders,” said Rhode Island Energy Commissioner Marion Gold.

She announced the new incentives Jan. 29 at the opening of the Northeast International Auto Show in Providence.

The moves by states to build consumer momentum for electric cars aim to reduce air pollution from gas-powered vehicles. The rebates are also seen as a popular measure to help people save on fuel.

A \$200,000 pool of state money will cover an estimated 80 to 100 new vehicles.

“We figured we had to get started,” said Gold, who hopes to expand the pilot if the rebates run out and new sources of money are found. “It’s a great push. It’s like a big giant coupon.”

The biggest rebates go to cars with the highest battery capacity. Amounts range from \$500 toward the purchase of a plug-in Toyota Prius to the maximum \$2,500 for about 10 different vehicles, from Tesla models to the Nissan Leaf or the BMW i3.

Nearly 40 states now offer some kind of incentive to replace gasoline-powered cars with electric models, according to the National Conference of State Legis-

latures. Those range from financial incentives such as rebates and credits to special parking privileges, exemptions from emissions tests or the ability to drive on freeway fast lanes.

Rhode Island’s new program is comparable to the rebates now offered in neighboring Connecticut and Massachusetts, said Democratic U.S. Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse, who also spoke at the car show. The state rebates are in addition to the \$7,500 buyers can get in federal tax credits.

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East Coast Snow Storm Slows Jan. Sales

DETROIT (AP) – U.S. auto sales fell slightly in January because of the East Coast snowstorm, but analysts say demand remains strong and buyers will likely head back into dealerships this month.

Sales fell less than 1 percent to 1.1 million, according to Autodata Corp. The mid-January storm, which buried New York and Washington D.C. under more than 2 feet of snow, cost automakers around 15,000 vehicle sales, said John Humphrey, J.D. Power's senior vice president of automotive.

But automakers said sales volumes returned to normal levels in the last weekend of the month.

Ford, Toyota, Honda and Volkswagen all saw sales decline from last January. General Motors' sales were flat. Fiat Chrysler posted sales increases.

Even with the lackluster results, analysts still expect another record year for U.S. vehicle sales. Low gas prices, low interest rates and an enticing lineup of new vehicles – particularly small SUVs like the Ford Edge – are continuing to draw shoppers.

U.S. buyers bought a record 17.5 million cars and trucks in 2015. Analysts expect sales to continue to grow this year, though at a slower pace as demand starts to plateau. That will likely mean an increase in cash-back offers and other incentives from automakers as they try to keep posting gains.

Kelley Blue Book said incentives increased about \$150 per vehicle in January to around \$3,000. Consumers should expect those numbers to go even higher over the next few months as Japanese automakers try to boost their sales before the end of their fiscal year in March.

Incentives are a tricky game for automakers. They can juice

sales in the short term, and automakers who don't keep pace can be punished. Ford said its F-Series pickup truck sales fell 5 percent in January partly because it spent around \$700 less per truck on incentives than its competitors.

But over the long term, incentives can hurt resale values and brand image, and they also cut into automakers' profits.

Ford said its average sale price per vehicle rose \$1,800 in January, or three times the industry average.

"It's very important to us to remain disciplined," said Mark LaNeve, Ford's U.S. sales chief.

General Motors' U.S. sales were flat in January at 203,745. Sales were up for its GMC and Buick brands, and sales of the GMC Sierra pickup jumped 14 percent.

But Chevrolet and Cadillac sales fell.

Ford's sales fell 3 percent to 173,723 vehicles. Ford's SUV sales were up but it saw double-digit declines in car sales. Even police departments prefer SUVs; Ford's police sedan sales dropped 33 percent but its police SUV sales were up 15 percent.

Fiat Chrysler's sales jumped 7 percent to just over 155,000 cars and trucks. Fiat Chrysler wasn't led by its usual big sellers. The Jeep Grand Cherokee and the Ram Pickup all posted modest increases, but sales got the biggest boost from some unlikely vehicles – including an 83 percent increase for the heavily discounted Dodge Caravan minivan.

Fiat Chrysler is introducing a new minivan this spring, so buyers looking for discounts may be snapping up the older minivans.

GM Works to Sell Plant Site

JANESVILLE, Wis. (AP) – General Motors has hired a premier commercial real estate firm to sell its former auto manufacturing plant and 250 acres in Janesville.

Five officials from General Motors and Los Angeles-based real estate broker CBRE met with seven Janesville officials and other stakeholders Feb. 1 to discuss the sale. Representatives from Gov. Scott Walker's office, Rock County, Forward Janesville and the Janesville Area Convention and Visitors Bureau also were present.

The gathering went "superbly," according to City Manager Mark Freitag, who complimented General Motors for its "honest, upfront" approach to business. His summary of the meeting reflected an understanding that General Motors and CBRE are willing to work with the city somewhat in the lead-up to a sale, the *Janesville Gazette* reported.

The firm will entertain any of the city's suggestions for the request for proposals it will issue to interested buyers, Freitag

said. The city also offered to help out if any of the interested buyers want to take a tour of Janesville.

The city believes another industrial use would be best given the property's size and proximity to a highway and railway system, but Freitag expects the company and firm to entertain other ideas for the property.

In the meantime, General Motors is making progress on environmental evaluations and clean-up on the property, according to Freitag. General Motors is expected to finish a study of ground contamination in the plant's north side as soon as April, and the company also plans to finish cleaning up ground pollution along the southern site by June, he said.

General Motors and CBRE reiterated at the meeting that they believe they'll be able to find a buyer within a year.

A global marketing campaign will be launched in the coming weeks, Freitag said. All parties are expected to meet again in March.

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GM Has Strong First Month of The New Year

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

have had the highest average transaction prices in their respective segments, according to J.D. Power PIN estimates.

Buick retail deliveries were also strong, Flores said. The brand surged 45 percent in January, driven by owner loyalty.

"We believe industry fundamentals such as the age of the vehicle fleet, well-managed inventory levels, firm used-car pricing, good credit availability and low fuel prices will support higher industry sales in 2016," said Mustafa Mohatarem, GM's chief economist. "In addition, household balance sheets are strong and the labor market continues to improve."

Flores said the Silverado had its best January total and retail sales since 2007. And 10 Chevrolet models - Silverado, Suburban, Tahoe, Colorado, Camaro, Impala, Malibu, Cruze, Sonic and Traverse - grew retail market share in their respective segments.

The new 2016 Chevrolet Malibu accounted for about half of Malibu sales in January. Malibu had its best January retail sales since 1981.

Tahoe and Suburban had their best January retail sales since 2008, Flores said. Cruze and Volt had their best January retail sales ever and the Camaro had its best January retail sales since 1996. Trax total and retail sales more than doubled.

GMC had its best January total and retail sales since 2004, Flores said. Combined Sierra and Canyon total sales increased, with Sierra up 14 percent and Canyon up 3 percent. Yukon retail sales were up 4 percent.

Buick had its best January retail performance since 2003, with retail deliveries up 45 percent. Total sales were the best January since 2004.

Combined sales of Buick's passenger cars were up 73 percent. LaCrosse had its best January total sales since 2010. Sales of Buick's crossovers were up a combined 24 percent. Encore has had 25 months year-over-year growth in both retail and total sales. The all-new Cascada is now arriving at Buick dealers.

Cadillac's SRX total deliveries were up 37 percent for its best January total sales ever. The brand is maintaining the highest ATPs in the brand's history, and leads its competitive set.

Ford Sales Mixed Bag in January; SUVs Perform

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

versus a year ago and the brand's best sales start since 2004. The new Edge was the biggest driver, posting a 26 percent jump on sales of 9,533 vehicles.

"Ford brand SUVs: we had our strongest start since 2004. The new Edge is really coming to its own for us - it was up 26 percent. And even places like Boston, which is a really big market - the Northeast is a big market for SUVs - we saw Edge up 45 percent, so one of our newest products doing very well for us," Merkle said

Transit sales increased 51 percent in January with 9,631 vehicles sold, lifting overall Ford van performance 20 percent for their best start since 1985.

F-Series January sales totaled 51,540 vehicles, down 5 percent. F-Series average transaction pricing grew \$2,500 last month, while incentive spending was down \$500 versus a year ago.