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Chevy's New Campaign 'A Little Bit Country'

Chevrolet and GMC are going all-out to promote the latest Silverado and Sierra.

GMC's campaign is called, "Step Up Like A Pro," and features the world's first six-function MultiPro tailgate offered on the next-generation Sierra.

The launch commercial, "Anthem," encourages customers to step up to GMC, confirming the 2019 GMC Sierra's status as the premium model among all trucks, said Rich Latek, director of GMC Marketing.

"'Step Up Like A Pro' is an empowering call to action that resonates with truck owners, encouraging them to reach higher in their lives and not accept the ordinary. 'Anthem' continues to define our GMC 'We Are Professional Grade' standards and signals landmark change to the industry," said Latek.

Chevrolet debuted its most comprehensive integrated marketing and social campaign to support the launch of the new Silverado. The campaign elements will reach a wide array of consumers through traditional and digital media, unique integrations and creative content that features real truck owners, said Chevrolet spokeswoman Afaf Farah.

The blitz began during the College Football Playoff National Championship on Jan. 7 with the debut of the new 60-second TV commercial, "A Little Bit Country, A Little Bit Rock 'n' Roll." Later that evening, the truck appeared in custom integrations on "Manifest" and "Jimmy Kimmel Live!" "In today's hyper-connected, always-on society, we knew the all-new Silverado launch campaign needed to be bold, engaging and comprehensive to break through the clutter while staying true to the brand's values and overall advertising approach,"

said Paul Edwards, U.S. vice president of Chevrolet Marketing. "Leveraging all the available channels – traditional and new – along with unique partnerships and integrations allows us to

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3



lege Football Playoff National *Chevy's most recent ad campaign for the Silverado shows many locations where the truck is most useful.*

GM Partnership Shows Where EVs Can Charge

Finding a place to charge one EV is going to get a little bit easier for GM customers.

General Motors will collaborate with EVgo, ChargePoint and Greenlots, three of the nation's leading electric vehicle (EV) charging networks, to enable access to the largest collective electric vehicle charging network in the United States, including more than 31,000 charging ports, said GM spokeswoman Meg Soule.

GM plans to aggregate dynamic data from each of the EV charging networks so owners of the all-electric Chevrolet Bolt EV can have a more seamless charging experience with their GM vehicles.

"GM believes in an all-electric future, and this is a significant step to make charging easier for our customers," said Doug Parks, General Motors vice president of Autonomous and Electric Vehicle Programs. "By collaborating with these three companies, we expect to reduce barriers to create a stronger EV infrastructure for the future. This is an important step toward achieving GM's vision of a world with zero emissions."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



Both Dodge and LEGO launched new 2018 Challenger SRT Demon models.

Dodge, LEGO Challenger SRT Demon Comes in All Sizes

It's been said that often the of one day driving on the road,"

Ford Debuts 2020 Explorer Ahead of NAIAS

Ford unveiled the 2020 Explorer at a special event at Ford Field in downtown Detroit just in time for the 2019 North American International Auto Show (NAIAS).

The new 2020 Explorer's debut took place on Jan. 9 and the vehicle is a complete redesign of America's all-time best-selling SUV, said Ford spokesman Dan Jones.

The new Explorer now features the broadest model lineup ever, more power and space, and new smart technologies to help drivers tackle life's adventures, Jones said.

Explorer is now more capable, comfortable, sportier and roomier in all three rows thanks to Ford's flexible new rear-wheeldrive architecture, said Hau Thai-Tang, Ford's head of product development and purchasing. The

Ford unveiled the 2020 Explor- new SUV arrives in dealership at a special event at Ford Field this summer.

"Explorer drivers told us what they want – more capability, more power, more space," said Hau Thai-Tang, Ford's head of product development and purchasing. "They want more technology, not just for the driver, but for the whole family. And they want all of it with a beautifully sporty exterior. This new Explorer gives them all of that, and more, helping make every journey more enjoyable."

Improved off-road capability comes courtesy of intelligent four-wheel drive and an available new Terrain Management System that features seven easy-toengage drive modes.

Powertrain offerings include a 3.0-liter turbocharged EcoBoost V6 projected to produce 365

horsepower and 380 lb.-ft. of torque using 93-octane gas, making this the most powerful Explorer ever. Jones said. The Explorer lineup now features standard, XLT, Limited, Limited Hybrid, ST and Platinum models.

The new Explorer comes packed with more than a dozen new standard features for only \$400 more over the previous model. Standard features include a power liftgate, 2.3-liter Eco-Boost engine with a new 10speed transmission, 8-inch digital touch screen with SYNC 3, FordPass Connect Wi-Fi service for up to 10 devices and more.

Owners will find design and engineering updates throughout that deliver comfort and SUV functionality, Jones said.

difference between men and boys is the price of their toys.

Thanks to a new FCA arrangement, that's literally true.

Dodge and The LEGO Group entered into a partnership pairing the two brands through a new multimedia marketing campaign, said FCA spokeswoman Diane Morgan.

The campaign launches with a new 30-second television commercial "Metamorphosis" that first breaks across the Dodge brand's Instagram, Twitter, Facebook and YouTube channels. The initiative also includes a new LEGO Speed Champions building set that features the 2018 Dodge Challenger SRT Demon and the 1970 Dodge Charger R/T.

"We know that many of our Dodge//SRT enthusiasts become fans of the brand at an early age, and like me, also grow up building LEGO vehicles that we dream

said Steve Beahm, head of Passenger Car Brands, Dodge//SRT, Chrysler and FIAT – FCA North America.

"With the new Speed Champions set featuring the 2018 Dodge Challenger SRT Demon and the 1970 Dodge Charger R/T, our youngest fans can now build and jump into the 'driver's' seat of two of their ultimate fantasy muscle cars."

"We are thrilled to bring the exciting Dodge designs to a LEGO build and play experience that is sure to capture the imaginations of not only LEGO fans, but also car lovers and the passionate community of Dodge enthusiasts around the world," said Chris Stamp, senior designer, LEGO Group.

As part of the LEGO Speed Champions series of buildable

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3 Ford brought out the Explorer's entire build team to debut the 2020 edition of the SUV at Ford Field.

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Chevrolet's Alliance to Map Charging Stations Locations

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Troy-based Auto **Supplier Hires** New President

Looking to expand its position in the global auto industry, Troybased Röchling Automotive USA hired Michael Brosseau as president, effective Jan. 8.

He brings 30 years of auto experience, including three as president of the Brose Group. His expertise includes new mobility integrated system solutions, said company spokeswoman Christine Olszewski.

"We are delighted to have Mike, with his extensive automotive industry experience, join our team to grow and lead our business within the North American market," said Erwin Doll, CEO, Röchling Automotive Group

"Röchling has an impressive history of developing solutions to address industry challenges including reducing emissions, weight and fuel consumption. With our industry constantly evolving, we're excited to have Mike help us expand our position in the market and add to our experience and knowledge.'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Dynamic charging information received from EVgo, ChargePoint and Greenlots will enhance future versions of the myChevrolet app, Parks said.

New information to be provided by the charging networks will include real-time data on charge station health to report if a charging station is working, available and compatible with a Bolt EV, offering a onestop shop for all range and charging data before or during a trip.

Importantly, GM also expects to make enrollment for charging with these networks easier by creating an app interface for all three networks to streamline charger access and potentially allow activation of a charging session using the app instead of a membership card, Parks said.

The myChevrolet app was recently updated to enable projection of the Energy Assist feature

to the vehicle's infotainment system via Apple CarPlay and Android Auto3 for drivers with model year 2017 or newer Bolt EVs.

This update enables Bolt EV drivers to access certain features through their vehicle's infotainment system, such as vehicle range, charging station locations and search, as well as route planning that takes into consideration charging stops along the way if the destination is out of range.

Original purchasers of new Bolt EVs will have access to these features at no additional cost for five years from the vehicle delivery date after they accept the myChevrolet mobile app terms and review important information about using

their myChevrolet app, Soule said.

Vehicle users should see user terms for limitations.

GM's Maven Gig and EVgo partnered in early 2018 to deliver the nation's first dedi- cated fastcharging network for on-demand drivers, Parks said.

GM expects to finalize the terms of its collaboration and agreements with EVgo, Charge-Point and Greenlots during the first quarter of 2019.



Energy Assist features within EV drivers can now get help from Chevy in finding EV charge stations.

Ford Debuts 2020 Explorer Ahead of the 2019 Auto Show

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Explorer's sloped-roof silhouette protects rear-seat headroom, while its comfort-enhanced second-row seats slide to improve access to the third row.

We obsessed about what Explorer customers need and want," said Bill Gubing, Explorer chief engineer. "We met with customer groups, pored through internet forums, and dissected social media posts to determine what they love about today's Explorer and understand their pain points.

"Then we found ways to improve it across the board. Every enhancement on this all-new Explorer was inspired by our customers.

Building upon Ford's push to bring more driver-assist technology to market, the all-new Explorer introduces available Active Park Assist 2.0, Jones said.

The class-exclusive feature standard on Explorer Platinum allows the driver to park in a parallel or perpendicular spot with a touch of a button without having to work the steering wheel, gear shifter, gas pedal or brake pedal.

Available reverse brake assist, also standard on Platinum, uses radar and ultrasonic sensors to detect an object in Explorer's path, and can apply the brakes automatically to avoid an imminent collision when the vehicle is backing up at a low speed - such as when exiting a driveway.

Explorer also is available with Ford's new Intelligent Adaptive Cruise Control with Speed Sign Recognition, Jones said. In addition to automatically slowing when traffic ahead slows and helping keep the vehicle centered in its lane, the system uses cameras to read speed signs and. combined with the available navigation system, adjusts cruise control settings accordingly.

Passengers in all three rows will enjoy FordPass Connect, a standard feature that serves up 4G LTE Wi-Fi for up to 10 mobile devices with a compatible wireless subscription service.

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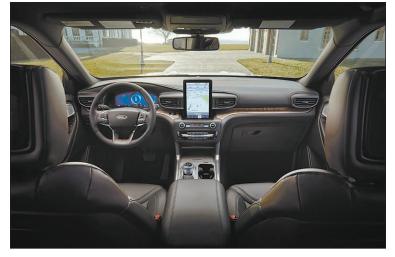
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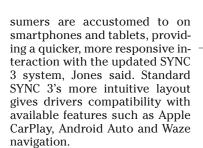
The new Explorer interior boasts a 10.1-inch touch screen.

FordPass Connect gives drivers remote access to their Explorer, allowing them to use their smartphone to lock, unlock, locate and start the vehicle, as well as monitor key vehicle diagnostics. Jones said.

Explorer features an available 10.1-inch touch screen mounted in portrait configuration on the center stack. Navigation maps can fill the entire screen for easy viewing, or split the space with audio information.

The screen uses capacitive glass comparable to what con-

WINGS



A wireless charging pad is available that allows customers to recharge compatible mobile devices, and up to four USB ports, including new type-C outlets, charge next-generation mobile devices. Up to three 12-volt outlets and a 110-volt outlet are also available.

The powerful new engine lineup features a pair of EcoBoost entries - a 2.3-liter turbocharged I-4 that comes standard on base, XLT and Limited models, and a 3.0-liter twin-turbocharged V6 that powers Explorer Platinum. The 2.3-liter engine is projected to produce 300 horsepower and 310 lb.-ft. of torque, with improved performance over the outgoing Explorer equipped





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with the same engine, Jones said.

"A vehicle like Explorer can't just be good-looking," said Craig Patterson, Ford SUV marketing manager. "Explorer customers need it to do certain things. They need to be able to drive certain places and haul specific items.'

Warren Mom-Son Event in Warren

A Mother-Son Fun night is being sponsored by the Warren city government.

The event will be held at the city's Community Center, 5460 Arden Ave., on Saturday, Feb. 23, from 6 to 8 p.m.

The event is aimed at boys between the ages of four and 12. The cost is \$8 a ticket for each Warren resident, \$13 for non-residents.

To learn more and sign up, call 586-268-8400. Moms and sons must both register.

Tech Center News

JANUARY 14. 2019

COVERS THE TECH CENTER AND THE IMMEDIATE AREA

Chevrolet's New Campaign 'A Little Bit Country'

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reach both traditional truck buyers and potential new customers who may be drawn to the versatility and lifestyle that comes with owning a pickup truck."

To reach the widest possible audience, Chevrolet is using a variety of different ways to reach the public, Farah said.

For example, in a first for the automotive industry, two Silverados will be featured in the commercial breaking through the traditional brown Amazon packaging boxes. And Chevv owners can have their 7.1 million packages delivered to their vehicle through the Amazon Key In-Car Delivery partnership.

And Chevy has partnered with several magazines to sponsor custom front cover designs. Magazine covers include Bon Appétit, ESPN, GQ, Motor Trend, Rolling Stone, Southern Living, Sports Illustrated, Texas Monthly and US Weekly.

And Chevrolet will showcase the versatility of the Silverado bed with a unique infield activa- whatever their passion or work

tion at the Daytona 500 called Hotel Silverado, Farah said.

Chevrolet partnered with the American Cancer Society to reward a deserving family with the once-in-a-lifetime experience of "camping" in the Daytona International Speedway infield - sleeping in specially outfitted Silverado truck beds. Also, for the first time ever, the Davtona 500 will be paced by a pickup truck. Dale Earnhardt Jr. will lead the crowd to the green flag in a new Silverado.

The GMC Sierra campaign, on the other hand, is more tightly focused in its message - the truck's bed. The campaign was launched across numerous media channels and consumer touchpoints with innovative content, some of which "breaks" out of a user's social feed, said GMC spokeswoman Jennie Ecclestone, who also said the Sierra campaign emphasizes the bed of the pickup for a specific reason.

"The bed of a pickup truck is the main reason that light-duty pickup owners purchase their vehicle for, it helps them with



The Sierra's new ad campaign urges customers to 'step up like a pro.'

might be," Ecclestone said in an email.

"Knowing this, our engineers wanted to try to make the new truck as functional and versatile as possible and developed this all-new, industry-leading tailgate.

With six different functions, including easier access to the box with a fold down panel, an inner gate load stop for secondtier loading and a full-width step which doubles as a convenient seat.

"The development of this didn't come at the expense of other key technology differentiators for Sierra, including the first-in-class 15-inch diagonal head-up display and rear camera mirror."

A GMC exclusive, the available world's-first MultiPro tailgate offers six functions and positions for enhanced secondtier loading, load-stop solutions and easier access to items in the cargo box, including primary gate.

Fraser Sinkhole Traced to Human Error

FRASER, Mich. (AP) - Officials say a sinkhole north of Detroit that damaged homes and cost \$75 million to fix was caused by human error that allowed the quick release of waste and water into a sewer line.

Macomb Public Works Commissioner Candice Miller said Jan. 9 that an assessment determined the surge fractured the pipe in Fraser which drew in sand and created a void in the surrounding soil.

The pipe collapsed and caused the Dec. 24, 2016, sinkhole which grew to football fieldsize.

But the problem started in 2014 when a gate was closed to hold back sewage for pipe maintenance. Miller said the gate was supposed to be gradually raised to allow the flow's release over several hours. She said that wasn't done properly on a number of occasions.

She said an insurance claim will be filed to recover some costs.

Demon Comes in All Sizes

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

iconic vehicles, modern meets classic in a new set featuring the 2018 Dodge Challenger SRT Demon and 1970 Dodge Charger R/T. Fans of all ages of the Dodge and LEGO brands can recreate a thrilling drag racing experience after building the LEGO Speed Champions 2018 Dodge Challenger SRT Demon and 1970 Dodge Charger R/T models.

The Dodge Challenger SRT Demon features two sets of wheel rims, authentic design details and decorative stickers while the cool LEGO version of the Dodge Charger, an iconic American muscle car, has a removable supercharger and alternate engine cover. The set also includes three LEGO minifigures: a Challenger driver, Charger driver and a race marshal.

Then there is the race-ready, buildable 2018 Dodge Challenger SRT Demon features a minifigure cockpit, removable windshield, wheels with rubber tires, 2 sets of rims, rear spoiler, dual exhaust, and authentic design details and decorative

translucent light-style elements, and authentic design details and decorative stickers.

A limited number of LEGO Speed Champions building sets featuring the 2018 Dodge Challenger SRT Demon and the 1970 Dodge Charger R/T also will be available on Dodge.com.

2019 Auto Show Tickets on Sale

Tickets for the 2019 North American International Auto Show (NAIAS) are now on sale at naias.com/tickets.

The public portion of the show begins on Saturday, Jan. 19. The show ends on Saturday, Jan. 26

Tickets for adults are \$14 per person. Tickets for children aged seven through 12 are \$7. No charge for children under six.



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stickers.

The buildable 1970 Dodge Charger R/T muscle car features a minifigure cockpit, removable windshield, wheels with rubber tires, removable supercharger and alternate engine cover,



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Takata Airbag Difficulties Force Large Toyota Recall

by TOM KRISHER AP Auto Writer

DETROIT (AP) - Toyota is recalling 1.7 million vehicles in their vehicles have been recalled North America to replace potentially deadly Takata front passenger air bag inflators.

The move announced Jan. 9 includes 1.3 million vehicles in the U.S. and is part of the largest series of automotive recalls in the nation's history.

Takata inflators can explode with too much force and hurl shrapnel into drivers and passengers. At least 23 people have been killed worldwide and hundreds have been injured.

The recall covers Toyota models including the 2010 through 2016 4Runner, the 2010 through 2013 Corolla and Matrix, and the 2011 through 2014 Sienna. Also covered are Lexus models, including the 2010 through 2012 ES 350, the 2010 through 2017 GX 460, the 2010 through 2015 IS 250C and 350C, the 2010 through 2013 IS 250 and 350, and the 2010 through 2014 IS-F. The 2010 through 2015 Scion XB also is included.

Takata used the chemical ammonium nitrate to create a small explosion to inflate the air bags. But the chemical can deteriorate over time due to high humidity and cycles from hot temperatures to cold. The most dangerous inflators are in areas of the South along the Gulf of Mexico that have high humidity.

Toyota and Lexus dealers will either replace the inflator or the entire air bag assembly with equipment made by other manufacturers that does not contain ammonium nitrate. Owners will be notified by mail or other means in late January.

Toyota wouldn't say if anyone has been injured in vehicles covered by the latest recall.

Owners can check to see if by going to toyota.com/recall or airbagrecall.com and keying license plate or vehicle identification numbers.

Toyota's recall is part of a phased-in replacement of Takata inflators. Automakers are scheduled to replace 10 million starting this month. Ford and Honda have already announced recalls.

More than three years after the U.S. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration took over management of recalls involving Takata inflators, one-third of the recalled inflators still have not been replaced, according to an annual report from the government and a court-appointed monitor last year. The report says 16.7 million faulty inflators out of 50 million under recall have yet to be fixed.

Safety advocates say the completion rate should be far higher given the danger associated with the inflators.

The recalls forced Takata of Japan to seek bankruptcy protection and sell most of its assets to pay for the fixes.

Daddy-Daughter Event Set in Warren City Hall

Warren is holding its annual Daddy-Daughter Dance on Saturday, Feb. 9.

The event starts at 6:30 p.m. and ends at 8:30 p.m. It will be held in the City Hall

Atrium. Refreshments will be served. The cost is \$8 per person for residents. \$13 for non-residents. Call 586-268-8400 to register.



Members of the faculty at Lawrence Tech and West Bloomfield High School celebrated opening a tech hub.

Tech Hub Sends LTU Back to High School

Lawrence Technological Uni- ics tutoring, special classes and versity and West Bloomfield High School celebrated the opening of a "Tech Hub" space in the high school on Orchard Lake Road.

The university and high school have a history of close to 10 years of collaboration in several capacities, including dual-enrollment classes, internships, summer training sessions for West Bloomfield High School teachers, and special programs for West Bloomfield students interested in engineering.

The 650-square-foot Tech Hub, which opened on Jan. 10, will provide distance learning opportunities – classes taught by Lawrence Tech professors and West Bloomfield teachers, both via videoconferencing and in person – as well as with mathematevents, and admissions counseling, said Matt Roush, director of Media Relations at LTU.

West Bloomfield principal Pat Watson said the goal is to create as much opportunity as possible for students to consider multiple career pathways, including some they may not have considered before.

The Tech Hub also gives Lawrence Tech the opportunity to make WBHS students aware of the multiple affordable educational opportunities available at LTU.

"Our partnership with LTU allows students to participate in exceptional, real-world learning, and further differentiate their learning experiences, all while still in high school," Watson said.

Lisa Kujawa, LTU assistant provost for enrollment management, called Watson "an extraordinary leader who has developed a unique and innovative experience for his students and teachers" through the Tech Hub and other efforts.

Watson predicted that the relationship between LTU and West Bloomfield High "will last for a very long time." And, she said, Lawrence Tech was currently planning additional activities and programs for the space.

The West Bloomfield School District (WBSD) is a residential suburban community of about 24,000 residents. Roush said. The school district lies within West Bloomfield and includes the cities of Keego Harbor, Sylvan Lake and Orchard Lake Village.



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Starting immediately, Chevrolet is offering up to three complimentary months of OnStar safety and security coverage to more than 19 million eligible customers, said GM spokeswoman Maureen Bender.

The offer gives owners an extra layer of security during the winter months, which can bring dangerous driving conditions with heavy snowfall, ice and freezing rain.

The services available, such as Automatic Crash Response, Roadside Assistance, Emergency Services, Crisis Assist and access to a live advisor at the push of a button, can help owners feel more secure on the road when driving conditions worsen, said Paul Edwards, U.S. vice president of Chevrolet Marketing.

"These services can help Chevy customers drive with confidence during some of the most

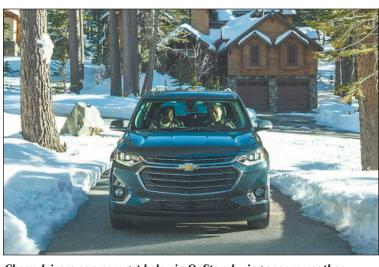
dangerous times to be on the road," said Edwards.

"With OnStar, we're bringing peace of mind to owners, knowing that an advisor is ready to help."

To receive these services, eligible Chevrolet owners should push their blue OnStar button and tell the advisor that they'd like to enroll in Chevy's complimentary OnStar Safety & Security offer, Bender said. The advisor will automatically provide one month of OnStar safety and security services at no cost, and two additional months of coverage if the owner puts a credit card on file for monthly auto renewal in a plan.

OnStar links to emergency services, Bender said. Not all vehicles may transmit all crash data. The OnStar plan, working electrical system, cell reception and GPS signal are required.

The offer is available for any eligible, properly equipped 2006 and newer Chevrolet vehicle with inactive OnStar service. The enrollment period ends on Jan. 23, 2019.



Chevy drivers can now get help via OnStar during snowy weather.

FCA Settles Emissions Suits

FCA US has reached final settlements on civil, environmental and consumer claims to resolve differences over diesel emissions requirements amounting to \$400 million.

Parties to the agreement include the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), the California Air Resources Board (CARB), the State of California, 49 other States and U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

FCA US has also settled a putative class action on behalf of private consumers, said FCA spokesman Eric Mayne.

Customer compensation, the estimated future cost of the extended warranty and the cost of environmental mitigation efforts also account for approximately \$400 million. The resulting \$800 million total is in line with the financial charge taken by the company for this purpose in the third quarter of 2018, Mayne said. The settlements do not change the company's position that it did not engage in any deliberate scheme to install defeat devices to cheat emissions tests, Mayne said Further, the consent decree and settlement agreements contain no finding or admission with regard to any alleged violations of vehicle emissions rules. We acknowledge that this has created uncertainty for our customers, and we believe this resolution will maintain their trust in us," said Mark Chernoby, the company's head of North American Safety and Regulatory Compliance. FCA US will conduct an emissions recall to update emissions control software in an estimated 100,000 model-year 2014-2016 Ram 1500 pickups and Jeep

Grand Cherokee SUVs equipped with 3.0-liter EcoDiesel V6 engines, Mayne said. The software reflash does not affect average fuel economy, drivability, durability or refinement of the vehicles.

Each current and former owner and lessee of these vehicles will be eligible to receive a payment averaging \$2,800 as part of the plaintiff steering committee settlement. The affected vehicles will also qualify for an extended warranty in connection with the software update, Mayne said.

"We have implemented rigorous new validation procedures and updated our training programs to ensure continued compliance with the increasingly complex regulatory environment," Chernoby said.

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The settlements are now lodged with the San Francisco division of the United States District Court, North District of California, where they await judicial approval.

The \$400 million in civil penalties includes \$305 million payable to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) and the California Air Resources Board (CARB) for environmental claims.

Other penalties include, \$13.5 million to the California Attorney General for consumer claims and mitigation expenses, and \$72.5 million to various other state attorneys general for environmental and consumer claims, as well as \$6 million to Customs and Border Protection.

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FCA Big Winner in 2018 New Vehicle Sales

by TOM KRISHER AP Auto Writer

DETROIT (AP) - Sales of new vehicles in the U.S. rose slightly in 2018, defying predictions and highlighting a strong economy.

Automakers reported an increase of 0.3 percent over a year ago to 17.27 million vehicles.

The increase came despite rising interest rates, a volatile stock market, and rising car and truck prices that pushed some buyers out of the new-vehicle market.

Industry analysts and automakers said strong economic fundamentals pushed up sales and should keep them near historic highs in 2019.

"Economic conditions in the U.S. are favorable and should continue to be supportive of vehicle sales at or around their current run rate," Ford Chief Economist Emily Kolinski Morris said after the company and other automakers announced their sales numbers Jan. 3.

That auto sales remain near the 2016 record of 17.55 million is a testimonial to the strength of the economy, said Mark Zandi, chief economist at Moody's Analytics. The job market, he said, has created new employment, and wage growth has accelerated.

"That's fundamental to selling anything," he said. "If there are lots of jobs and people are getting bigger paychecks, they will buy more.'

The unemployment rate is 3.7 percent, a 49-year low. The economy is thought to have grown close to 3 percent last year, its best performance in more than a decade.

Consumers, the main driver of the economy, are spending freely.

The Federal Reserve raised its key interest rate four times in

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2018 but is only expected to raise it twice this year.

Auto sales also were helped by low gasoline prices and rising home values. Zandi said.

It all means that people are likely to keep buying new vehicles this year even as they grow more expensive. The Edmunds.com auto-pricing site estimates that the average new vehicle price hit a record \$35,957 in December, about 2 percent higher than the previous year.

It will be harder for automakers to keep the sales pace above 17 million because they have been enticing buyers for several years now with low-interest financing and other incentives, Zandi said.

He predicts more deals in the coming year as job growth slows and credit tightens for higherrisk buyers.

Edmunds, which provides content, including automotive tips and reviews, for distribution by The Associated Press, predicts that sales will drop this year to 16.9 million.

Edmunds Senior Analyst Jessica Caldwell says leases will expire on over 4 million vehicles, putting more people into the market for new vehicles but also adding an abundant supply of late-model used vehicles.

It's too early to tell if more people will opt for used cars, trucks and SUVs, she said.

"They may be priced out of the market," she said. "Interest rates and purchase prices are higher." Auto interest rates averaged

around 5.6 percent last year, up

from 4.8 percent in 2017, she said.

The massive shift from cars to trucks and SUVs continued last year. Cars made up only 32 percent of sales, while trucks and SUVs were 68 percent.

Here's how major automakers fared in sales last year compared with 2017:

- General Motors, down 1.6 percent to 2,954,037. The company passed 200,000 in U.S. sales of electric vehicles last quarter, meaning its federal electric vehicle tax credit will start to expire. The full credit will be available through March and will gradually be phased out by March 31, 2020.
- Ford, down 3.5 percent to 2,497,318. F-Series pickup sales rose 1.4 percent to 909,330, and it remained the top-selling vehicle in the U.S.
- Toyota, down 0.3 percent to 2,426,672. The RAV4 compact SUV was the top-selling U.S. vehicle that isn't a pickup truck. Sales rose 4.8 percent to 427.170.
- Fiat Chrysler, up 8.5 percent to 2,235,204. The Jeep brand posted a record year with sales of 973,227, up 17 per cent.
- Honda, down 2.2 percent to 1,604,828.
- Nissan, down 6.2 percent to 1,493,877.
- Subaru, up 5 percent to a record of 680,135.
 - Hyundai, down 1.1 percent to 677,946.
 - Kia, flat at 589,673.

Ghosn Remains Behind Bars

by YURI KAGEYAMA AP Business Writer

TOKYO (AP) - The appeal by the lawyers of Carlos Ghosn, Nissan's former chairman, against his prolonged detention since his arrest Nov. 19 was rejected Jan. 9 by the Tokyo District Court.

Ghosn's lawyers filed the appeal a day earlier. Ghosn's detention on suspicion of breach of trust had been approved through Jan. 4. It is unclear what the prosecutors might do next. They can tag on additional allegations and "rearrest" a suspect or might decide to file formal charges on the breach of trust allegations.

The lawyers and Ghosn argued in court Jan. 8 against the detention. In his first public appearance since his arrest, Ghosn vigorously asserted his innocence and defended himself against each allegation.

The judge rejected the arguments, reiterating concerns Ghosn might flee Japan or tamper with evidence.

Denial of bail for months is common in Japan's criminal system and is often criticized as with Nissan's dealer problems and investments in the Gulf.

Ghosn has been held at the Tokyo Detention Center, although he has been transferred to a bigger room with a bed.

Until his sudden downfall, Ghosn was a respected figure in the global auto industry. He was credited with rescuing Nissan from near-bankruptcy, reviving the Japanese automaker, allied with Renault SA of France, into one of the world's most successful auto groups.

Canadian Union Protests GM Closing Plant

OSHAWA, Ontario (AP) Unionized workers at the General Motors assembly plant in Oshawa, Ontario, staged a second work stoppage on Jan. 9 after the company confirmed it would not reconsider plans to close the facility that would lead to the loss of 3,000 jobs.

The union said the protest Jan. 9 morning lasted close to two hours and followed about a five-hour sit-down at the plant the evening before. Union president Jerry Dias sat down with GM on Jan. 8 to talk about union proposals to extend the life of the Ontario plant, including extending the life of the Chevy Impala and Cadillac XTS produced at the plant or shifting production slated for Mexico to the plant. GM said they were not economically viable. GM announced in November it would cut up to 14,000 workers in North America and put five plants up for possible closure. David Paterson, vice president of corporate affairs at GM Canada, said the union should instead work with the company on timing and transition plans for the workers losing their jobs. GM said it has identified job opportunities, is willing to pay for retraining and is open to negotiations on packages for workers on top of what is already included in contracts.

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Legal experts say that, once suspects are charged, they can be held until their trials start so that evidence and witnesses can be decided upon and registered with a court, while they are still detained.

Ghosn, who led Nissan Motor Co. for two decades, is charged with falsifying financial reports in underreporting his income by about 5 billion yen (\$44 million) over five years through 2015.

No trial date has been set. Trial preparation can take months.

The breach of trust allegations center around having Nissan shoulder Ghosn's personal investment losses in foreign exchange transactions, and payments of money from Nissan to a Saudi businessman.

Ghosn and his lawyers say there was a prior agreement Nissan would not suffer any losses on the collateral deal, and legitimate payments went to the businessman for his services to help



