

Interest in Fuel-Efficient Cars Quickly Followed Spike in Gas Prices in January

The Used/CPO Car Insights Report from the AutoTrader.com Trend Engine shows that shoppers quickly turned their attention to fuel-efficient compact and midsize cars in the wake of rising gas prices.

ATLANTA, Feb. 29, 2012 /PRNewswire/ -- Echoing the trend seen in the recently released New Car Insights Report, the notable increase in gas prices in January also sent used car shoppers searching for fuel-efficient cars on AutoTrader.com. In January, the national average for a gallon of fuel rose to nearly \$3.40 per gallon, a 30 cent increase over the same time last year. With that increase in gas prices came a jump in interest for more fuel-efficient compact and midsize sedans from December 2011 to January 2012, in both the certified pre-owned (CPO) and used (non-CPO) arenas.

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This trend was most evident in the lists of Big Movers, which include vehicles that have generated significantly more interest in one month compared to the month prior. Analysts at AutoTrader.com keep a close watch on the big movers, as they illuminate interesting early trends in consumer shopping behavior.

"Car shoppers are heavily influenced by economic factors, and the price of fuel has a strong correlation to the specific vehicles shoppers are considering," said Rick Wainschel, vice president of automotive insights at AutoTrader.com. "With the spike in gas prices in January combined with forecasts for even higher prices, interest in fuel-efficient vehicles will very likely increase in the coming months."

In the CPO arena, five fuel-efficient cars showed increases in consumer interest on the list of Big Movers:

- Kia Optima moved up 35 spots to No. 155
- Chevrolet Cruze moved up 19 spots to No. 85
- Ford Focus moved up 15 spots to No. 115
- Hyundai Elantra moved up 14 spots to No. 89
- Volkswagen Eos moved up 11 spots to No. 142

For Used (non-CPO) vehicles, five fuel-efficient cars also showed increases in consumer interest on the list of Big Movers:

- Kia Optima moved up 19 spots to No. 113
- Chevrolet Cruze moved up 17 spots to No. 160
- Volkswagen Beetle moved up 17 spots to No. 201
- Toyota Prius moved up 10 spots to No. 78
- Dodge Caliber moved up 10 spots to No. 106

The increasing interest in fuel-efficient vehicles was enough to buoy the compact and midsize car segments from December to January--for both CPO and late model used (non-CPO). Month-over-month, the CPO compact car segment experienced an increase of 0.7 share points, while the CPO midsize car segment experienced an increase of 0.5 share points. These were the two biggest increases in share for segments.

On the late model used (non-CPO) side, the compact car segment increased 0.5 share points month-over-month, and the midsize car segment increased the same. Again, these were the two biggest increases in share for any of the 13 segments.

Full Report Available Online

The Used/CPO Car Insights Report, brought to you by the AutoTrader.com Trend Engine, provides analysis of pre-owned car shopper behavior on the AutoTrader.com site. In addition to the trend seen with fuel-efficient vehicles, analysts also noted sustained and growing interest in two popular models from the Chrysler Group: the Jeep Grand Cherokee and Jeep Wrangler. For more information on this topic, view the full report [here](#).

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