Consumer Interest in Larger Autos Continues to Rise as Gas Prices Fall

New Year, Relaxed Credit and Pent Up Demand May Help Revive Auto Sales

ATLANTA, Jan. 7 /PRNewswire/ -- Larger vehicles continued to see increases in views across AutoTrader.com as gas prices fell to around $1.60 nationally. The new Ford F-150 led the way with the most overall views of any new vehicle on AutoTrader.com during the month of December, enjoying an increase of 23.03% from December 2007. The new Dodge Ram also gained in consumer interest, with an increase of views of 43.16% year-over-year. This rise in interest for these two full-size pick-ups came partially at the expense of their chief competitors, the Chevrolet Silverado and GMC Sierra, which were down 12.64% and 2.73% year-over-year, respectively.

(Logo: http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/20080205/CLTU088LOGO)

Consumers also researched dealership inventories on other large SUVs and minivans such as the Honda Pilot and Honda Odyssey, which saw increases in views of 129.63% and 60.46%, respectively, as well as large family sedans including the Chevrolet Impala and Honda Accord, which were up 32.11% and 27.13%.

Asking prices for most new vehicles on AutoTrader.com generally rose during the month of December, which at first seems counterintuitive considering the sluggish economy and rising manufacturer incentives. However, among consumers who are shopping for a new vehicle, many are opting for less- expensive, less well-optioned cars and trucks, leaving dealerships with better-optioned, more expensive inventory. With most manufacturers now scheduling production stoppages to better match the overall supply of vehicles available with consumer demand, dealers are not as quickly replenishing their inventories of these lower-priced vehicles.

"Consumers have reached new levels of concern about the current state of the economy, a fact reflected in the sales numbers we have seen since October," said AutoTrader.com President and CEO Chip Perry. "At the same time, we are seeing new-car shoppers making every dollar count by spending increased time on-line looking at a larger selection of vehicles to find the right car or truck at the right price."

Used Vehicles Continue Price Drops

Used vehicle prices and research levels showed drops across the board, in line with the current economic mood of the nation. Bright spots included the Chevrolet Tahoe, which saw a fraction of a percentage point increase in views year over year; the Jeep Wrangler, which saw a 6.34% jump compared to December 2007, and the Toyota Tundra, which recorded a 10.42% increase.

"Just as with new cars, used vehicles are also suffering due to consumers' economic fears," said Perry. "However, just as with those new vehicles, great deals are available for the asking for shoppers looking to buy a used vehicle in the New Year."

Perry remains optimistic that automobile sales will begin to revive in 2009. In the short term, Federal bailout money flowing into the financial sector should make credit more available. Tight credit has been a major impediment for those buyers who were in-market for a new or used vehicle, limiting vehicle sales to buyers with the highest credit scores or significant down payments. Aggressive moves in pricing and incentives by manufacturers and dealers looking to move existing inventory off of lots, combined with increased access to financing, should help sales into 2009.

In the longer-term, Federal bailout money will allow the Detroit manufacturers to retool their factories and balance sheets, with an eye towards future development.

"Shoppers considering a vehicle purchase in 2009 need to know that credit is

available," said Perry. "And for many people who put off a vehicle purchase because of economic uncertainty or because of tight credit, there is pent up demand. This is illustrated by the fact that our unique visitor traffic was up about 20% in December of this year compared to December of last year. So people are definitely on-line looking at vehicles, considering their options, building their consideration sets and figuring out what they can afford. I do believe with a new year, easier access to financing and this pent up demand, we should start seeing some positive movement in auto sales in 2009."

AutoTrader.com is the ultimate automotive marketplace with over 3.5 million vehicle listings. Using research gathered by studying the shopping habits of over 14 million unique monthly visitors to the site, many of whom are in-market shoppers looking to complete a vehicle purchase within the next 90 days, AutoTrader.com regularly compiles this data to offer insight into current and emerging sales trends in the automobile industry.

About AutoTrader.com

AutoTrader.com, created in 1997 and headquartered in Atlanta, Ga., is the Internet's leading auto classifieds marketplace and consumer information website. AutoTrader.com aggregates in a single location more than 3.5 million new, used and certified pre-owned vehicle listings from 40,000 dealers and 250,000 private owners and the site attracts more than 14 million unique monthly visitors. Through innovative merchandising functionality such as multiple photos, videos, detailed descriptions and comprehensive research and compare tools, AutoTrader.com unites new and used car buyers and sellers online to improving the way people research, locate and advertise vehicles. AutoTrader.com is a majority-owned subsidiary of Cox Enterprises. The venture capital firm Kleiner Perkins Caufield & Byers is also an investor. For more information, please visit www.autotrader.com.

MAKE	MODEL	Rank 12/08	Rank 12/07	Change from 12/07	Avg Price- 12/08	Avg Price- 12/07	Change from 12/07
Ford	F150	1	2	23.03%	$31,673.68	$32,907.15	-3.75%
Honda	Accord	2	3	27.13%	$26,059.86	$25,596.12	1.81%
Chevrolet	Silverado 1500	3	1	-12.64%	$30,836.02	$29,736.29	3.70%
Toyota	Camry	4	4	17.48%	$24,196.44	$24,875.27	-2.73%
Honda	Civic	5	6	24.49%	$20,636.39	$20,082.63	2.76%
Dodge	Ram 1500	6	10	43.16%	$33,897.99	$31,793.97	6.62%
Nissan	Altima	7	7	11.85%	$24,690.39	$24,677.25	0.05%
Dodge	Challenger	8	N/A	N/A	$37,774.65	N/A	N/A
Jeep	Wrangler	9	14	12.11%	$27,621.26	$26,987.90	2.35%
Ford	Mustang	10	5	-21.89%	$31,838.09	$30,006.47	6.10%
Toyota	Corolla	11	17	16.68%	$18,776.40	$17,145.79	9.51%
Chevrolet	Tahoe	12	13	2.45%	$47,386.02	$44,207.69	7.19%
Honda	Pilot	13	64	129.63%	$35,340.91	$32,626.92	8.32%
Chevrolet	Malibu	14	8	-8.15%	$24,353.95	$22,304.74	9.19%
Honda	Odyssey	15	36	60.46%	$33,939.91	$33,103.07	2.53%
Toyota	Tacoma	16	19	6.89%	$25,341.87	$24,933.08	1.64%
Chevrolet	Impala	17	26	32.11%	$25,728.14	$24,310.47	5.83%
GMC	Sierra 1500	18	16	-2.73%	$32,891.52	$32,157.68	2.28%
Chevrolet	Silverado 2500	19	12	-12.65%	$38,642.00	$38,562.01	0.21%
Honda	CR-V	20	23	11.39%	$25,478.64	$24,425.67	4.31%
					Used Cars		
Ford	F150	1	1	-11.25%	$15,686.84	$18,873.42	-16.88%
Chevrolet	Silverado 1500	2	2	-17.16%	$15,554.25	$19,046.05	-18.33%
Ford	Mustang	3	3	-20.80%	$16,087.19	$17,821.07	-9.73%

Dodge	Ram 1500	4	6	-5.09%	$14,211.91	$17,230.68	-17.52%
Honda	Accord	5	4	-25.97%	$15,429.18	$16,227.56	-4.92%
Chevrolet	Tahoe	6	11	0.13%	$19,430.89	$22,472.00	-13.53%
Infiniti	G35	7	10	-3.64%	$19,758.94	$23,423.53	-15.64%
Honda	Civic	8	5	-26.40%	$14,114.65	$14,119.26	-0.03%
Jeep	Grand Cherokee	9	9	-11.93%	$13,946.60	$16,487.84	-15.41%
Ford	F250	10	8	-15.16%	$19,735.17	$24,569.75	-19.68%
Jeep	Wrangler	11	18	6.34%	$16,220.68	$18,509.76	-12.37%
Ford	Explorer	12	7	-28.27%	$13,637.04	$16,064.24	-15.11%
Toyota	Tacoma	13	13	-15.64%	$17,406.99	$19,034.67	-8.55%
Nissan	Altima	14	12	-24.49%	$14,098.32	$15,112.88	-6.71%
Chevrolet	Silverado 2500	15	17	-18.28%	$19,144.04	$23,017.15	-16.83%
Audi	A4	16	15	-22.93%	$20,866.46	$22,434.50	-6.99%
Dodge	Ram 2500	17	21	-7.68%	$20,270.38	$24,445.91	-17.08%
Chevrolet	Corvette	18	22	-3.91%	$35,939.76	$39,147.34	-8.19%
Toyota	Camry	19	16	-23.94%	$16,148.26	$16,775.17	-3.74%
Toyota	Tundra	20	36	10.42%	$18,246.13	$22,079.05	-17.36%

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