Domestic and Korean Automakers Find Opportunities in the Mid-Winter Chill

Severe Snowstorms Cool Dealers' Lots in February, but Record AutoTrader.com Site Traffic Points to a Warm Spring

ATLANTA, March 8 /PRNewswire/ -- New car shopping among retail customers took a turn downward in February as winter weather kept consumers away from dealers' lots in large parts of the country. Still many manufacturers saw good news, as average asking prices continued a steady creep upwards. In addition, record AutoTrader.com site traffic and other market indicators mean that consumers may be ready to buy once the weather turns warmer.

"Winter weather early in the month slowed shopping for new vehicles down in entire parts of the Northeast and Midwest United States," said AutoTrader.com President and CEO Chip Perry. "For dealers looking to move new vehicles, spring weather cannot arrive soon enough."

Shopping activity for some new Toyota vehicles took a dip on AutoTrader.com after showing resilience during the company's current recall situation. Perennial top 20 new models the Toyota Camry and Corolla fell off the top 20 in February. However, the new Toyota Tacoma actually jumped up six spaces, from No. 18 in January of 2010 to No. 12 last month. Toyota was the No. 3 most-viewed brand on AutoTrader.com in February, a position it held in February of last year.

"In the longer term, Toyota will most certainly move past these troubles and will regain the confidence and consideration of consumers searching for their next new vehicle," added Perry.

Two entries from Korea, the new Hyundai Sonata midsize sedan and new Kia Sorento crossover, both benefiting from exposure during the Superbowl, saw big jumps on AutoTrader.com in February. The Sorento jumped from the No. 43 most-viewed new vehicle on AutoTrader.com in January 2010 to No. 18 in February. A year ago February, the Sonata ranked at No 113. The new Hyundai Sonata jumped from No. 95 in January of 2010 to No. 16 last month. The Sonata ranked No. 94 in February of 2009.

"Major events like the Superbowl remain a great way to expose people to a brand and get them to put it in their consideration set," said Perry. "The activity the Sonata and the Sorento experienced on our site following that Superbowl exposure shows how integrating marketing across all channels – mainstream media and on-line – can influence consumers to take a look at your vehicle."

New Ford and Chevrolet models dominated the top 5 of AutoTrader.com's top 20 most-viewed new cars list in February, with Ford capturing the top spot again with the new F-150 pickup truck and Chevy following at No. 2 with the new Camaro.

Used Cars Hold Steady in Activity, Average Asking Prices Rise

The used car market continued to hold steady, as both demand and average asking prices climbed steadily throughout February. Demand for pick-up trucks and SUVs, most likely driven partially by the weather in February, was especially strong. The biggest gainers in views were all among heavy-duty 2500-series pick-ups, including the Ford F-250, up 29% compared to February 2009, the Chevrolet Silverado 2500, up almost 28% from last February, and the Dodge Ram 2500, up 25% from last February. Average asking prices were similarly up for these vehicles, with increases running between 14% for the F-250 to 16% for the Ram.

Shopping for Certified Pre-Owned vehicles was also down due to the same concerns around weather, as well as depleted inventories for these vehicles due to reduced

leasing and general slowness in new vehicle sales over the past several years. Still, pricing for CPO vehicles generally rose during February, with trucks and SUVs again leading the way. The Chevrolet Silverado saw average asking prices increase of almost 17% compared to February 2009 for Certified models, while the Honda Pilot crossover saw an increase in average asking prices of 17% compared to last February.

"While shopping activity overall was down somewhat, we still recorded traffic to our site, indicating consumers are more engaged now than they were during most of 2009 in the process of researching a new or used vehicle purchase," said Perry. "Shopping activity on dealer lots slowed by bad weather will likely lead to a strong March as consumers who stayed away from the lots in February venture back out as the weather warms."

In February, AutoTrader.com logged 15.5 million unique monthly visitors, the highest February traffic the company had ever experienced. AutoTrader.com also hit a record traffic day on February 15 with 986,052 unique visitors on that day.

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 millions of new cars, used cars and certified pre-owned cars from thousands of auto dealers and private owners. The site attracts about 15 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 2/10	Rank 2/09	Rank 1/10	Change from 2/09	Avg Price – 2/10	Avg Price – 2/09	Change from 2/09
				New Cars				
Ford	F-150	1	1	1	-36.20%	$36,055.04	$33,242.28	8.46%
Chevrolet	Camaro	2	516	3	39303.57%	$33,996.88	N/A	N/A
Ford	Mustang	3	3	4	-31.58%	$32,275.55	$32,495.91	-0.68%
Chevrolet	Silverado 1500	4	2	2	-36.70%	$34,044.33	$31,848.41	6.89%
Chevrolet	Equinox	5	88	5	209.42%	$27,316.13	$26,254.35	4.04%
Chevrolet	Tahoe	6	16	6	-28.72%	$49,518.23	$47,709.91	3.79%
Jeep	Wrangler	7	5	13	-42.66%	$28,936.64	$27,337.18	5.85%
Honda	Accord	8	12	10	-35.10%	$25,958.71	$25,871.68	0.34%

Ford	F-250	9	13	12	-34.85%	$44,521.29	$42,261.61	5.35%
Honda	Civic	10	14	14	-35.20%	$19,955.25	$20,895.57	-4.50%
Ford	Fusion	11	40	9	19.38%	$25,706.41	$22,628.46	13.60%
Toyota	Tacoma	12	6	18	-45.38%	$26,176.99	$25,141.20	4.12%
GMC	Terrain	13	N/A	8	N/A	$29,856.59	N/A	N/A
Nissan	Altima	14	25	19	-19.11%	$24,696.06	$24,544.49	0.62%
Ford	Escape	15	23	15	-22.96%	$27,659.60	$25,975.57	6.48%
Hyundai	Sonata	16	94	95	124.19%	$21,588.11	$21,828.39	-1.10%
GMC	Sierra 1500	17	26	16	-22.24%	$36,231.49	$34,239.77	5.82%
Kia	Sorento	18	113	43	187.34%	$26,128.20	$24,431.63	6.94%
Volks-wagen	Jetta	19	31	30	-18.96%	$23,354.64	$22,509.63	3.75%
Dodge	Ram 1500	20	4	21	-57.70%	$34,248.32	$33,851.53	1.17%

Used Cars

Ford	F-150	1	1	1	9.44%	$19,419.85	$16,495.26	17.73%
Chev-rolet	Silverado 1500	2	2	2	10.62%	$18,907.32	$16,082.87	17.56%
Ford	Mustang	3	4	3	-13.05%	$16,972.80	$16,063.85	5.66%
Ford	F-250	4	5	8	29.53%	$23,243.20	$20,305.38	14.47%
Honda	Accord	5	6	4	-4.38%	$15,612.72	$15,119.13	3.26%
Dodge	Ram	6	7	5	-4.26%	$17,486.41	$14,898.53	17.37%
Chev-rolet	Tahoe	7	8	9	10.26%	$24,322.19	$20,586.32	18.15%
Honda	Civic	8	9	7	-11.61%	$13,410.80	$13,512.40	-0.75%
Jeep	Wrangler	9	11	11	11.38%	$19,169.42	$16,171.96	18.53%
Chev-rolet	Silverado 2500	10	10	17	27.79%	$22,768.32	$19,829.73	14.82%
Nissan	Altima	11	12	13	5.48%	$14,428.10	$13,976.05	3.23%
Infiniti	G35/G37	12	14	6	-23.22%	$22,174.67	$20,380.81	8.80%
Dodge	Ram 2500	13	13	20	24.99%	$24,279.56	$20,874.87	16.31%

Ford	Explorer	14	17	14	-3.46%	$15,523.03	$14,011.62	10.79%
Toyota	Tacoma	15	15	16	-2.69%	$18,902.66	$17,188.78	9.97%
Jeep	Grand Cherokee	16	18	10	-17.34%	$16,386.46	$14,505.73	12.97%
BMW	5-Series	17	16	12	-12.22%	$29,673.73	$29,524.91	0.50%
Volks-wagen	Jetta	18	23	22	-4.27%	$12,983.42	$12,551.62	3.44%
Audi	A4	19	22	15	-20.33%	$20,599.06	$20,268.76	1.63%
GMC	Sierra 1500	20	24	37	27.02%	$19,816.00	$16,783.04	18.07%

MAKE	MODEL	Rank 2/10	Rank 2/09	Rank 1/10	Change from 2/09	Avg Price – 2/10	Avg Price – 2/09	Change from 2/09
				Certified Pre-Owned				
BMW	3-Series	1	1	1	-20.20%	$31,199.47	$31,614.70	-1.31%
Honda	Accord	2	2	2	-5.00%	$18,140.18	$17,672.41	2.65%
Chev-rolet	Silverado 1500	3	3	3	-12.64%	$23,351.81	$19,978.35	16.89%
Chev-rolet	Tahoe	4	4	4	-4.27%	$31,631.90	$27,590.83	14.65%
Ford	F-150	5	5	6	-4.91%	$23,603.74	$21,076.88	11.99%
BMW	5-Series	6	6	5	-18.28%	$37,037.79	$35,786.19	3.50%
Toyota	Tundra	7	7	7	-27.06%	$24,747.78	$21,605.32	14.54%
Audi	A4	8	11	11	-18.01%	$26,455.67	$24,689.76	7.15%
Honda	Civic	9	9	8	-22.68%	$16,154.28	$16,334.56	-1.10%
Toyota	Tacoma	10	10	12	-24.03%	$21,868.32	$20,096.18	8.82%
Toyota	Camry	11	8	9	-31.61%	$18,172.03	$18,287.68	-0.63%
Acura	TL	12	12	16	-7.34%	$27,026.21	$24,174.21	11.80%
Mercedes-Benz	E-Class	13	14	10	-39.09%	$37,564.41	$34,090.31	10.19%

Ford	Mustang	14	13	20	-9.31%	$20,141.20	$18,457.75	9.12%
Honda	Pilot	15	16	28	-0.70%	$24,511.50	$20,947.69	17.01%
Chev-rolet	Impala	16	18	13	-35.70%	$16,279.21	$15,207.79	7.05%
Mercedes-Benz	C-Class	17	19	18	-19.11%	$30,099.36	$26,305.75	14.42%
Volks-wagen	Jetta	18	22	27	-7.34%	$15,976.79	$14,909.75	7.16%
GMC	Sierra 1500	19	20	32	10.32%	$24,376.07	$20,288.96	20.14%
Chev-rolet	Suburban	20	23	23	-9.67%	$33,480.58	$29,024.59	15.35%

TOP-VIEWED BRANDS	Rank 2/10	Rank 2/09
Ford	1	2
Chevrolet	2	1
Toyota	3	3
Honda	4	5
Dodge	5	4
Nissan	6	6
Hyundai	7	7
Kia	8	21
Jeep	9	9
BMW	10	11

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