High Gas Prices Kept Consumers Focused on Smaller Cars in May, According to the AutoTrader.com Trend Engine Report

Demand for smaller, more fuel-efficient cars pushed average asking prices higher for new and used cars in May.

ATLANTA, June 9, 2011 /PRNewswire/ -- Gas prices started a slow but steady decline at the end of May in many areas, but the still-high cost kept car shoppers focused more on fuel-efficient vehicles than their usual trucks and SUVs. According to AutoTrader.com's monthly Trend Engine report, which provides analysis of consumer shopping behavior on the site, many of the trends from April 2011 remained steady in May, from the still-strong interest in smaller cars and the continuing rise in average asking prices across the lists of most-searched new, used and Certified Pre-Owned (CPO) vehicles.

Additionally, average asking prices continued to rise on the site with some of the largest year-over-year increases so far this year. On the list of most-searched new vehicles, average asking prices increased for 13 out of the top 20; on the used vehicle list, average asking prices increased for 12 out of the top 20; and on the CPO list, average asking prices increased for 13 of the top 30. The new Kia Optima had the largest year-over-year increase of any car, at nearly 21%.

Interest in Fuel-Efficient Cars Remains Strong

Interest in fuel-efficient vehicles remained strong in May across the lists of the most-searched new and used vehicles on AutoTrader.com.

On the list of the most-searched new vehicles on AutoTrader.com in May, nine of the top 10 remained the same. The new Ford Focus broke the top 10 last month, moving up two spots from April 2011. The new Hyundai Sonata made the biggest move month-over-month, moving up five spots from No. 19 in April to No. 14 in May. The No. 8 Chevrolet Cruze, No. 9 Volkswagen Jetta and No. 17 Kia Optima all held their ground month-over-month on the list of most-searched new cars. Two fuel-efficient models, the new Ford Fiesta and new Hyundai Elantra, made slight drops month-over-month; however, both of these models are still far ahead of their placement on the list year-over-year. The new Ford Fiesta moved up 183 spots year-over-year, going from No. 202 in May 2010 to No. 19 in May 2011, and the new Hyundai Elantra moved up 55 spots year-over-year, going from No. 71 in May 2010 to No. 16 in May 2011.

The list of most-searched used vehicles stayed relatively stable month-over-month, with only small movements occurring mostly in the lower half of the list. However, the year-over-year comparison showed that trucks and SUVs continued to decline in popularity, as all seven of these vehicles lost ground from May 2010 to May 2011. The larger, heavy duty trucks took the biggest hits year-over-year, with the Chevrolet Tahoe, Chevrolet Silverado 2500 and Dodge Ram 2500 all dropping four spots. Conversely, family cars made notable year-over-year improvements, with the Honda Civic and Volkswagen Jetta both moving up four spots and the Audi A4 and Nissan Altima moving up five spots.

Month-over-month, there were no new additions to the list of most-searched CPO vehicles, and consumers interested in these vehicles seemed less concerned overall with fuel-efficiency. In fact, the three vehicles to make month-over-month increases were either trucks or SUVs: the CPO Toyota Tundra moved up two spots from No. 7 in April to No. 5 in May, the CPO Chevrolet Tahoe moved up three spots from No. 14 to No. 11 and the CPO Toyota 4-Runner moved up two spots from No. 20 to No. 18. However, the biggest year-over-year decreases were also large trucks and SUVs, showing that while interest may have increased on a few select models recently, two popular models are still garnering less interest than they did the same time last year. The CPO Chevrolet Tahoe and the Ford F-150 both dropped six spots year-over-year.

The only SUV to make a notable year-over-year leap was the CPO Honda CR-V, which moved up 12 spots, going from No. 31 in May 2010 to No. 19 in May 2011. The CR-V's relatively good fuel efficiency for its class could have contributed to this leap, as consumers attempt to find a balance between their needs for cargo and passenger space and decent fuel economy.

Majority of Asking Prices Increased Year-Over-Year for New, Used and CPO

A big trend facing the auto industry recently has been the rising price of vehicles across the spectrum of new, used and CPO models, and AutoTrader.com's data from May shows that this trend is alive and well. The majority of vehicles across all of the most-searched lists showed increases in average asking price.

On the new vehicle list, 13 out of 20 vehicles posted increases, with the smaller, more fuel-efficient cars garnering the biggest increases year-over-year. The new Kia Optima again showed the biggest increase of nearly 21%, going from $20,202 in May 2010 to $24,422 in May 2011; the new Hyundai Elantra gained 16% in average asking price, going from $17,373 to $20,223; and the new Ford Focus gained 12.74% in average asking price, going from $18,708 to $21,092 year-over-year.

For used vehicles, Toyota and Honda models showed the biggest increases in average asking prices year-over-year. The used Toyota Camry posted the biggest increase in average asking price, moving from $15,347 to $17,333, an increase of nearly 13%; the used Honda Accord came in second with an increase of nearly 10%, moving from $15,779 to $17,342; and the average asking price for the used Honda Civic increased around 9%, moving from $13,621 to $14,868. These perennial favorites are typically in high demand, but that demand may have increased for used models due to the production shortages caused by the natural disasters in Japan earlier this year, according to AutoTrader.com analysts.

Overall, average asking prices for the majority of CPO vehicles rose year-over-year, with 13 out of the top 20 showing increases, though there was less organization around body style or manufacturer than seen on the new and used lists. The CPO Acura MDX showed the biggest increase in average asking price of 21%, moving from $20,202 to $24,422 year-over-year; the CPO Ford Mustang came in second with an increase of 16%, moving from $17,373 to $20,223; and the CPO BMW 5-Series gained 13%, moving from $18,708 to $21,092.

According to AutoTrader.com analysts, prices are heavily affected by supply and demand, and the increase in consumer demand overall with the still-limited supply of used cars and the challenges facing the new car market due to anticipated shortages have again pushed prices higher.

Luxury Cars Make Big Moves in May on the New Car Front

Each month, AutoTrader.com looks at the Top 10 Big Movers on the site, which are cars that generated significant jumps in their rank on the site month-over-month, even if the vehicles didn't receive enough interest to garner a spot in one of the top 20 most-searched lists.

On the new car front, many of the top 10 big movers were sporty luxury cars. The BMW 6-Series took another big leap in May, moving up 107 spots month-over-month. This big leap comes on the heels of a prior 34 spot jump the car made in April. Another sporty luxury car to make a big leap in May was the new Audi A7, which leapt an impressive 92 spots. Mercedes-Benz also made headway in May with its G-Class and CLS-Class vehicles, which both landed in the top five big movers on the new list, moving up 30 and 27 spots, respectively.

The used and CPO big movers lists in May were lighter on luxury cars. On the used list, the Nissan GT-R took another big leap in May, moving up 45 spots; in the previous month, the GT-R leapt 26 spots. The Kia Sorento appeared on both the used and CPO

big movers lists, coming in at No. 10 on the used list and No. 9 on the CPO list. Though there was not a heavy focus on more fuel-efficient models, the CPO list did include two vehicles known for their high MPGs: the Hyundai Elantra and the Lexus GS 450h, which both moved up 19 spots month-over-month.

Most-Searched Brands on AutoTrader.com

Again in May, Ford ranked as the No. 1 most-searched brand for new and used vehicles, and Chevrolet stayed firm in the No. 2 spot on both lists. The list of most-searched brands for used vehicles was the same as in April, though there slight year-over-year changes with both Honda and Volkswagen moving up one spot from May 2010 to May 2011. For new vehicle brands, the top six remained the same month-over-month, with slight position changes and one newcomer: Kia came in at No. 7, up six spots year-over-year.

Top 10 Articles on AutoTrader.com in May

AutoTrader.com publishes insightful and informative articles about automobiles and car shopping, including how-to tips, car reviews and automotive trend stories. In May, the top 10 articles on AutoTrader.com centered on two key themes: cars for new grads and vehicles once owned by celebrities that are now for sale on AutoTrader.com.

The most-viewed articles on AutoTrader.com in May were:

1. Top 10 Used Cars Under $10,000 For Grads – Cars are a popular gift for grads, so AutoTrader.com experts put together a list of great cars for the 18 to 24 age group that come at a reasonable price.
2. For Sale on AutoTrader: The King's Carriage – The 2005 Rolls Royce Phantom once belonging to Lebron "King" James is now for sale on AutoTrader.com.
3. For Sale on AutoTrader: Jason Bateman's BMW Wagon – Arrested Development's Jason Bateman once owned this 2007 BMW 530xi, which is currently for sale on AutoTrader.com
4. Top 7 Cars for New Moms – New moms don't have to trade in their cool to get a vehicle suitable for the family; AutoTrader.com experts compiled a list of seven stylish, yet practical, cars for growing families.
5. 5 Cars That Inspire You to Stay in School – There are a few cars, such as the Ferrari 458 Italia, that remind us to keep working hard in school to achieve the success needed to make dream cars a reality.
6. Special Car Deals for College Graduates – Numerous companies doled out special incentives such as rebates and financing offers to recent grads.
7. For Sale on AutoTrader: NHL Player Brian Campbell's Mercedes-Benz CL63 – Chicago Blackhawks fans have a chance at owning one of the star player's vehicles: a 2009 Mercedes-Benz CL63 AMG.
8. 8 Cars to Impress Your Classmates – Our experts put together a list of the best new cars under $20,000 that will have new college students arriving in style on campus this fall.
9. 2001-2005 Honda Civic - Used Car Video Review – The Civic's sustained popularity and reputation for reliability make it a favorite among used car shoppers.
10. For Sale on AutoTrader: Alan Jackson's Porsche Boxster Spyder – This gently used (and rarely driven) 2011 Boxster boasts a unique exhaust, less than 1400 miles and a superstar former owner.

These articles and more, including coverage of upcoming auto shows and events, can be found at www.autotrader.com/research.

About AutoTrader.com

Atlanta-based AutoTrader.com, created in 1997, is the Internet's ultimate automotive

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 sellers and is a leading online resource for auto dealers, individuals and manufacturers to advertise and market their vehicles to in-market shoppers. The company also provides a robust suite of software tools for dealers and manufacturers to help them manage and market their vehicle inventory and display advertising on the Internet. AutoTrader.com continues to grow key business metrics, including revenue, profitability and site traffic. Today, AutoTrader.com attracts more than 15 million unique monthly visitors who utilize the site to review descriptions, photos and videos of vehicles for sale; research and compare vehicles; review pricing and specials; and read auto-related content like buying and selling tips and editorial coverage of major auto shows and automotive trends. AutoTrader.com operates two other auto marketing brands, AutoTraderClassics.com and AutoTraderLatino.com. AutoTrader.com also owns used vehicle management software company vAuto, Kelley Blue Book (Kbb.com) and HomeNet Automotive, a leading provider of online inventory management and merchandising solutions for the automotive retail industry.
AutoTrader.com is a majority-owned subsidiary of Cox Enterprises. Providence Equity Partners is a 25 percent owner of the company and Kleiner Perkins Caufield & Byers is also an investor. For more information, please visit www.autotrader.com.

MAY TOP 10 NEW VEHICLE BRANDS SEARCHED

MAKE	Rank 5/11	Rank 5/10
Ford	1	1
Chevrolet	2	2
Dodge	3	5
Toyota	4	3
Nissan	5	4
Hyundai	6	8
Kia	7	13
Jeep	8	14
Honda	9	6
Volkswagen	10	12

MAY TOP 10 USED VEHICLE BRANDS SEARCHED

MAKE	Rank 5/11	Rank 5/10
Ford	1	1
Chevrolet	2	2
Toyota	3	3
BMW	4	4
Dodge	5	5
Honda	6	7
Nissan	7	6
Mercedes-Benz	8	8
Jeep	9	9
Volkswagen	10	11

MAY TOP 20 MOST-SEARCHED NEW CARS

MAKE	MODEL	VDP Rank 5/11	VDP Rank 4/11	VDP Rank 5/10	Avg. Price 5/11	Avg. Price 5/10	Price % Change
Ford	Mustang	1	1	1	$35,817	$32,106	11.56%
Chevrolet	Camaro	2	2	2	$33,977	$34,028	-0.15%
Ford	F-150	3	3	3	$38,029	$37,188	2.26%
Chevrolet	Corvette	4	4	6	$66,670	$70,384	-5.28%
Dodge	Challenger	5	5	11	$33,699	$34,733	-2.98%
Jeep	Wrangler	6	6	7	$30,085	$29,470	2.09%
Chevrolet	Silverado 1500	7	7	4	$33,349	$33,863	-1.52%
Chevrolet	Cruze	8	8	n/a	$21,074	n/a	n/a
Volkswagen	Jetta	9	9	18	$23,119	$23,528	-1.74%
Ford	Focus	10	12	45	$21,092	$18,708	12.74%
Dodge	Charger	11	11	56	$31,214	$29,277	6.62%
Ford	Explorer	12	10	40	$39,070	$36,959	5.71%
Dodge	Ram 1500	13	13	13	$35,361	$34,652	2.05%
Hyundai	Sonata	14	19	9	$24,302	$22,888	6.18%
Chevrolet	Equinox	15	15	15	$27,591	$28,144	-1.96%
Hyundai	Elantra	16	14	71	$20,223	$17,373	16.40%
Kia	Optima	17	17	150	$24,422	$20,202	20.89%
Ford	F-250	18	18	5	$48,909	$45,046	8.58%
Ford	Fiesta	19	16	202	$18,138	$18,013	0.69%
Jeep	Grand Cherokee	20	20	93	$39,103	$35,860	9.04%

MAY TOP 20 MOST-SEARCHED USED VEHICLES

MAKE	MODEL	VDP Rank 5/11	VDP Rank 4/11	VDP Rank 5/10	Avg. Price 5/11	Avg. Price 5/10	Price % Change
BMW	3-Series	1	1	2	$26,227	$25,396	3.27%
Ford	F-150	2	2	1	$19,880	$20,737	-4.13%
Ford	Mustang	3	4	4	$19,158	$18,242	5.02%
Chevrolet	Silverado 1500	4	3	3	$19,586	$19,979	-1.97%
Honda	Civic	5	5	9	$14,868	$13,621	9.15%
Honda	Accord	6	6	6	$17,342	$15,779	9.91%
Jeep	Wrangler	7	7	7	$20,794	$20,576	1.06%
Ford	F-250	8	8	5	$24,202	$24,679	-1.93%
Dodge	Ram 1500	9	9	8	$17,807	$18,645	-4.49%
Infiniti	G35/37	10	11	11	$23,579	$23,174	1.75%
Nissan	Altima	11	12	16	$16,590	$15,289	8.51%
Toyota	Tacoma	12	10	12	$20,577	$19,038	8.08%
Audi	A4	13	14	18	$21,495	$21,665	-0.78%
Chevrolet	Tahoe	14	16	10	$23,360	$25,536	-8.52%
BMW	5-Series	15	15	15	$29,756	$30,203	-1.48%
Volkswagen	Jetta	16	13	20	$14,664	$13,626	7.62%
Chevrolet	Silverado 2500	17	17	13	$22,862	$23,317	-1.95%
Dodge	Ram 2500	18	18	14	$25,067	$24,974	0.37%
Jeep	Grand Cherokee	19	20	19	$17,864	$16,831	6.14%
Toyota	Camry	20	19	21	$17,333	$15,347	12.94%

MAY TOP 20 MOST-SEARCHED CERTIFIED PRE-OWNED CARS

MAKE	MODEL	VDP Rank 5/11	VDP Rank 4/11	VDP Rank 5/10	Avg. Price 5/11	Avg. Price 5/10	Price % Change
BMW	3-Series	1	1	1	$35,817	$32,106	11.56%
Honda	Accord	2	2	2	$33,977	$34,028	-0.15%
Chevrolet	Silverado 1500	3	3	3	$38,029	$37,188	2.26%
Audi	A4	4	4	9	$66,670	$70,384	-5.28%
Toyota	Tundra	5	7	4	$33,699	$34,733	-2.98%
Honda	Civic	6	5	10	$30,085	$29,470	2.09%
Toyota	Camry	7	6	8	$33,349	$33,863	-1.52%
Toyota	Tacoma	8	8	11	$21,074	n/a	n/a
Volkswagen	Jetta	9	9	13	$23,119	$23,528	-1.74%
BMW	5-Series	10	10	7	$21,092	$18,708	12.74%
Chevrolet	Tahoe	11	14	5	$31,214	$29,277	6.62%
Ford	F-150	12	12	6	$39,070	$36,959	5.71%
Acura	TL	13	11	14	$35,361	$34,652	2.05%
Toyota	Highlander	14	13	15	$24,302	$22,888	6.18%
Honda	Pilot	15	15	16	$27,591	$28,144	-1.96%
Ford	Mustang	16	16	12	$20,223	$17,373	16.40%
Acura	MDX	17	17	21	$24,422	$20,202	20.89%
Toyota	4-Runner	18	20	17	$48,909	$45,046	8.58%
Honda	CR-V	19	18	31	$18,138	$18,013	0.69%
Nissan	Altima	20	19	23	$39,103	$35,860	9.04%

MAY TOP 10 BIG MOVERS – NEW VEHICLES

MAKE	MODEL	Rank 5/11	Rank 4/11	Rank Change
BMW	6-Series	104	211	107
Audi	A7	45	137	92
Bentley	Continental	170	201	31
Mercedes-Benz	G-Class	177	207	30
Mercedes-Benz	CLS-Class	233	260	27
Chrysler	200	74	98	24
Lotus	Evora	181	205	24
Hyundai	Elantra Touring	155	178	23
Rolls Royce	Phantom	208	229	21
Lincoln	MKX	188	208	20

MAY TOP 10 BIG MOVERS – USED VEHICLES

MAKE	MODEL	Rank 5/11	Rank 4/11	Rank Change
Nissan	GT-R	254	299	45
Acura	NSX	395	420	25
Volkswagen	Tiguan	273	298	25
Ford	T-Bird	282	303	21
Lamborghini	Murcielago	285	306	21
Mini	Cooper Countryman	427	448	21
Aston Martin	Vantage	277	296	19
Toyota	Land Cruiser	290	308	18
Aston Martin	DB7	391	407	16
Kia	Sorento	118	133	15

MAY TOP 10 BIG MOVERS – CPO VEHICLES

MAKE	MODEL	Rank 5/11	Rank 4/11	Rank Change
Dodge	Ram 3500	212	234	22
Cadillac	Escalade	74	95	21
Toyota	Celica	296	317	21
Cadillac	SRX	117	136	19
Chevrolet	Monte Carlo	220	239	19
Hyundai	Elantra	165	184	19
Lexus	GS 450h	250	269	19
BMW	M Coupe	261	278	17
Kia	Sorento	208	225	17
Dodge	Challenger	92	108	16

SOURCE AutoTrader.com

For further information: Julie Shipp, +1-404-568-7914 (ph), +1-404-558-7837 (cell), julie.shipp@autotrader.com

---

https://press.autotrader.com/news-releases?item=66873