

Detroit Auto Scene

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Deadline: Thursday 5:00 p.m.
for the next edition of Monday

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Buick January Sales Best In Nine Years

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Year-over-year growth for the month was 57 percent retail and 57 percent total.

The new 2013 Enclave luxury crossover features updated styling, new technology, and industry-exclusive safety features. The vehicle is in high demand. According to JD Power PIN data, the typical Enclave is spending about 20 days on a dealer's lot, less than half of the industry average "days to turn" for midsize crossovers.

"With two luxurious crossovers and three beautiful sedans, Buick's model lineup has never been stronger," said Brian Sweeney, vice president of Buick Sales and Service. "January sales show that customers are responding to the brand's new models."

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'Chrysler is as American as It Was When It Was Founded'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

He added that shouldn't obscure the fact that they still have a lot of room for improvement.

Smith also noted that Marchionne stated in Rome that he believed the merger between Chrysler and Fiat would take place in 2014, but that the UAW's pension fund people have different opinions on the value of Chrysler. Smith asked just what those differences are.

Marchionne said that while VEBA, the pension people, and Chrysler have different opinions on the worth of the stock held by VEBA, the market will ultimately set the value of the stock in question.

"And whenever it sets the price, then I think we'll reconcile

the differences and move it on from there, but these two organizations need to be connected," Marchionne said. "The work that we've done over the last four years is way too important and it's way too integral to the way in which the house runs today to break it apart because of different ownership structures. So I think we owe it to the people, we owe it to the business, and hopefully we'll get it done by the end of next year."

Smith then asked what the public would be seeing coming from Italy. Marchionne said the first Alfa Romeo should hit the dealers by the end of the year. He added that he believes the company owes it to Chrysler dealers, especially the ones who have made a commitment to Fiat, to

try and work out a way for them to "carry the brand."

"So we're going to meet with them probably at the beginning of the second quarter and really come up with a final proposal that will delineate the distribution network in the U.S.," Marchionne said. "But I think, you know, we have the people and I think we have the product and that's the important thing."

Smith concluded the interview by asking if the public needed to know anything else about the future.

"No, I think we're in good shape, and I just want to thank you for giving us an opportunity to speak to Detroit this morning again. I think it's a good day. Any day after a Super Bowl like yesterday is a good day," Marchionne said.

Flacco Wins Super Bowl, Stingray

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

On behalf of Chevrolet, the official sponsor of the Super Bowl XLVII MVP Award, Flick presented quarterback Joe Flacco with a 2014 Corvette Stingray last week in recognition of his efforts in leading the Baltimore Ravens to a 34-31 win over the San Francisco 49ers.

"Banner Chevrolet and the entire city of New Orleans have been through so much since the storm, we felt this was a small

gesture to bring the comeback story full circle," said Alan Batey, GM vice president of U.S. Sales, Service and Marketing. "With the Super Bowl in his backyard, we couldn't think of a better guy to have the honor of awarding the MVP with his Corvette Stingray."

Banner Chevrolet suffered one of the largest losses ever recorded for a dealership in the United States and recently completed a massive multimillion-dollar renovation complete with state-of-the-art technology.

Lincoln Web Searches Soar 350% After Super Bowl Commercial

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"Look at Chrysler," Stelmaszek said. "Their regular ads that run 364 days a year are fine, but they are no where near as good as the ads they run on Super Bowl Sunday. That one day shows you what one excellent ad can do. As the players say, go big or go home."

The Ram ad, Stelmaszek said, displayed a series of values that embodied the brand and showed that the company shared the values of the customer.

"It's one thing to say you share the values," Stelmaszek said. "Now you have to show it. I visited the Ram Web site just after the commercial aired and you have to scroll down past a lot of material about farmers before you see items on trucks."

For the Lincoln ad, Stelmaszek said they did well in creating striking imagery. The idea behind the ad was to link social space with broadcast space. If a company does that well, they can do well for themselves.

But while Lincoln asked for audience engagement, they asked for it on "The Jimmy Fallon Show" several weeks before the Super Bowl instead of on the big day.

"I will say this," Stelmaszek said, "I looked up some statistics which showed that Internet searches of the Lincoln Motor Company went up 350 percent after the ad ran."

"Regardless of anyone's opinion, interest in the company's vehicles went up. And that's not a bad thing."

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