

Big 3 Continue Setting Strong Sales Records

February was a good month for Detroit's auto companies, as all three posted sales increases.

Ford U.S. February sales grew 9 percent with 195,822 vehicles sold. This marks Ford's best February sales in six years - with cars up 6 percent, utilities up 21 percent and trucks up 4 percent.

"As more new vehicle buyers continue returning to the marketplace, our fresh new product portfolio of fuel-efficient vehicles is winning over customers," said Ken Czubay, Ford vice president, U.S. Marketing, Sales and Service. "People are buying our all-new Fusion and Escape in record numbers, thanks to strong fuel economy and innovative new technologies."

Ford Fusion posted record February sales totaling 27,875 vehicles. This is a 28 percent gain over last February's record.

Escape followed January's record sales with a new February sales record of 24,110 vehicles - a 29 percent increase over last year. Plus, Explorer boosted its sales 59 percent in February, with 16,586 vehicles sold - its best February sales results in seven years.

February was also a very good month for Chrysler as the company saw a record-setting month for eight Chrysler Group vehicles. The Dodge Dart compact car continued to build momentum setting an all-time sales record in February with its 8 percent month-over-month sales gain.

In addition to the Dart, the Dodge Challenger muscle car set an all-time sales record with its 34 percent sales gain. Two additional Dodge brand models set records as well. The Dodge Avenger mid-size sedan and Dodge Journey full-size crossover each set a sales record for the month of February.

Two Jeep brand vehicles had record-setting February sales. The Jeep Patriot compact SUV and the iconic Jeep Wrangler each set sales records for month of February, as did the Chrysler 200 mid-size sedan and Fiat 500.

General Motors announced

U.S. Muscle Car Stamps Issued

The United States Postal Service will be releasing a series of stamps honoring the U.S. auto industries' muscle cars.

The stamps will bear the image of such classic pony cars as the 1966 Pontiac GTO, the 1967 Shelby GT-500, the 1969 Dodge Charger Daytona, the 1970 Plymouth Hemi Barricuda and the 1970s Chevelle SS.

The Muscle Car Forever stamps are the third issuance in the America on the Move stamp series. They will be issued as "Forever" stamps in sheets of 20 that will always equal a first-class price.

that it sold 224,314 vehicles in the United States in February, up 7 percent compared with a year ago. Retail sales and fleet sales were both up 7 percent. The fleet mix was 25 percent of total sales, equal to a year ago.

"The housing sector has now joined auto sales in propelling the U.S. economy forward," said Kurt McNeil, vice president of U.S. sales operations. "More importantly, the recovery in new home construction is reinforcing the underlying improvement in auto buying conditions, especially for pickups.

"Light vehicle sales have now been running at a mid-15 million unit annual rate since November," he added. "This sets us up well for the launches of key new products this year, including an all-new generation of Chevrolet and GMC full-size pickups and an

all-new Chevrolet Impala and Cadillac CTS."

The Cadillac CTS, along with the redesigned Buick LaCrosse and Regal, will be unveiled at the New York International Auto Show later this month.

All four GM brands posted higher year-over-year sales: Cadillac was up 20 percent; Buick was up 15 percent; GMC was up 10 percent, and Chevrolet was up 5 percent.

Crossover sales increased 17 percent and compact crossovers had their best month ever; truck sales were up 14 percent and car sales were down 4 percent.

Sales of GM's full-size pickups were up 28 percent to 58,039 units. The Chevrolet Equinox, GMC Terrain and the redesigned Buick Enclave had their best-ever February sales. The Chevrolet Spark and Cadillac ATS had their best sales months yet.

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