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GMC Moves Up To 9th in CR's Auto Reliability

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two models with sufficient data, sank from first place to 11th.

One of the key problem areas in *Consumer Reports'* survey centers on in-car electronics, including the proliferating suite of audio, navigation, communication, and connected systems in newer cars, Fisher said. Of the 17 problem areas CR asks about, the category including in-car electronics generated more complaints from owners of 2013 models than for any other category.

In many cases, the survey revealed touch-screen infotainment systems have been buggy, with frustrating screen freezes, touch-control lag, or a reluctance to recognize a cell phone, an MP3 device, or a voice command.

CR gathered data on more than 600 2012 and 2013 models, Fisher said.

GM Designer Earns 'Lifetime Achievement'

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Peters said that bringing back the Stingray was a personal goal for more than a decade, yet he acknowledged the high level of scrutiny associated with a car as iconic as the Corvette. To ensure he didn't get too bogged down in the vehicle's heritage, he reached back to his own youth and his infatuation with the 1963 Corvette owned by a schoolmate's father.

"My focus customer was going to be that 9-, 11-, 12-year-old kid," Peters told an interviewer earlier this year.

"Kids don't know and don't care about what's traditional."

He added, "When I see kids look at it and point, stop what they're doing and they go, 'Stingraaaaay,' that's when I know we got it."

GM, Ford and Chrysler Enjoy Strong October Sales

Although Halloween was in October, there was nothing spooky about the Big Three's sales for the month.

General Motors dealers delivered 226,402 vehicles in the United States in October, up 16 percent versus a year ago. Fleet sales were up 14 percent, said GM spokesman Jim Cain.

"Chevrolet, Cadillac and Buick-GMC all performed well in the month, and the sales tempo really picked up after the government shutdown ended," said Kurt McNeil, vice president, U.S. Sales Operations.

"We are particularly pleased with our truck momentum. Chevrolet and GMC have the newest and best light-duty trucks, sales are accelerating and we are gearing up for the second, third and fourth phases of our strategic truck plan."

Buick total sales increased 31 percent and retail sales were up 25 percent for the 18th consecutive month of year-over-year growth. Cadillac's sales increased 10 percent and have grown in each of the last 13 months, thanks to the all-new XTS and ATS, said Cain, adding that the SRX is on track for its best year ever. Retail sales were up 12 percent for the brand and more than 60 percent of buyers did not trade in a Cadillac.

GMC was up 16 percent. The Terrain had its best October sales ever, Cain said.

Chevrolet was up 15 percent.

Thirteen of its nameplates posted double-digit increases, including every SUV and crossover.

Retail sales of Chevrolet passenger cars were up 32 percent, as Cruze had its best-ever October retail sales, Impala retail deliveries nearly doubled, and Malibu retail sales increased 58 percent.

Deliveries of the Chevrolet Silverado and GMC Sierra were up 10 percent and 13 percent, respectively, from last year, while sales increased 62 percent from the previous month. The two vehicles accounted for about 76 percent of GM's light-duty deliveries.

Strong calendar-year-to-date sales have helped Chevrolet and GMC earn a 30 percent share of light-duty pickups priced \$40,000 or above. That's up 5 percentage points versus 2012.

Ford's October U.S. total sales of 191,985 vehicles were an increase of 14 percent over a year ago. Retail sales are up 15 percent, at 142,487 vehicles, said company spokesman Erich Merkle.

Gains were broad-based, with passenger cars up 19 percent, utilities up 9 percent, and trucks up 14 percent.

Ford Fusion and Fiesta posted best-ever October sales, and F-Series again topped 60,000 sales.

"October was simply an outstanding retail performance," said John Felice, vice president, U.S. Marketing, Sales and Service, "as consumers continued to choose Ford for great fuel effi-

ciency, styling and value at all levels of the market.

"The combination of great new products, such as Fusion and Escape, along with the strength of our dealers helped us achieve our best October retail sales month since 2004."

Fusion sales of 21,740 vehicles jumped 71 percent year-over-year, making it the car's best-ever sales performance for October, Merkle said. The strongest growth for Fusion is in the west region of the U.S., with retail sales up 77 percent. In the eastern region of the country, Fusion retail sales are up 65 percent.

Escape sales of 22,253 vehicles increased 12 percent, while Fiesta sales of 4,337 vehicles increased 9 percent – setting a new record for October, Merkle said.

F-Series sales of 63,803 trucks are up 13 percent, making October the sixth straight month above the 60,000-vehicle mark for F-Series. The last time Ford sold more than 60,000 trucks for six consecutive months was 2006.

Lincoln MKZ sales of 2,909 vehicles increased 80 percent over a year ago, leading the Lincoln brand to an overall increase of 38 percent. MKZ has now reported record sales for six of the last seven months, attracting significant conquest buyers to the Lincoln brand.

Chrysler reported U.S. sales of 140,083 units for October, an 11 percent increase compared with sales in October 2012 (126,185

units), and the group's best October sales since 2007.

The Chrysler, Jeep, Dodge and Ram Truck brands each posted year-over-year sales gains in October compared with the same month a year ago.

Overall, Dodge sales were up 12 percent, Jeep 7 percent, Chrysler brand 6 percent and Ram 22 percent.

The Ram Truck brand's increase was the largest sales gain of any Chrysler brand during the month.

"After a choppy start to the beginning of the month, Chrysler Group sales accelerated in the second half of the month with renewed consumer confidence and the launch of our all-new Jeep Cherokee," said Reid Bigland, head of U.S. Sales.

"Following a meticulous focus on quality, our new Jeep Cherokee began shipping to dealers and quickly selling, which helped us to achieve our 43rd consecutive month of year-over-year sales increases."

The 2014 Jeep Cherokee and the 2014 Ram ProMaster went on sale in October, expanding the Chrysler product lineup, said company spokesman Ralph Kiesel.

Six Chrysler vehicles logged their best October sales ever – Jeep Wrangler and Jeep Patriot, Dodge Journey crossover, Dodge Dart compact car, Dodge Challenger and Ram Cargo Van. This was the Wrangler's seventh sales record this year, including an all-time sales record in May.

'Surprise 'n' Delight' Feature Lights the Way For Drivers of New 2014 Chevrolet Impala

As winter approaches and daylight hours are getting shorter, more people will be driving in the dark.

For those uneasy with night driving, the 2014 Chevy Impala can help brighten the task, said Chevrolet spokesman Chad Lyons.

Impala headlamps, said Lyons, provide enhanced visibility that can help drivers avoid crashes after dark, the riskiest time of day.

According to a study by the Federal Highway Administration, the risk of a fatality at night among drivers not impaired by alcohol is more than two times higher than in daytime due to less visibility.

According to a 2009 study conducted by the Lighting Research Center at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, high-intensity discharge, or HID, headlamps like those on the new Impala can help drivers see objects in the road sooner than other types of headlamps, allowing for greater stopping distance, Lyons said.

Impala's new headlamps are a key to one of the most compre-

hensive collections of standard and available safety features in the segment, Lyons said. In conjunction with that, he added, Impala received the highest possible 5-Star Overall Vehicle Score for safety as part of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's New Car Assessment Program.

"This is something we like to call a 'surprise and delight' feature," Lyons said. "People don't necessarily think of headlight features when buying a car. But when they bring the vehicle home and see how well they work, they are surprised and delighted."

All 2014 Impala models are equipped with projector beam headlamp technology, a first for the redesigned flagship sedan, Lyons said. The LS and LT models use halogen projectors, while the up-level LTZ uses HID bi-functional xenon projectors that offer crisper and brighter illumination than regular headlamps.

Both types of projector distribute light evenly across the front of the car, providing a wider range of visibility than other

headlamps. Impala's new headlamps use curved reflectors and "prescription" lenses designed to project brighter light farther and with more directional accuracy. They also feature a light shield designed to reduce glare for oncoming traffic, Lyons said.

"Safety and customer satisfaction drove design and development of Impala's new headlamps," said Todd Pawlik, Impala chief engineer. "We benchmarked them against the best in the industry."

Lyons said that technology first appeared in the 2011 Cadillac CTS.

"Our engineers like to imagine what people need and want on their cars," Lyons said. "Putting this LED technology in the Impala can be seen as a safety issue. The farther you can see in



2014 Impala

the dark, the earlier you can stop. Safety has always been a big part of the decision-making process when determining what goes into the Impala."

Lyons said it's not unusual for luxury vehicles to lead the way with new features. For example, anti-lock brakes and keyless vehicle entry were once features only available on the more expensive vehicles.

Now they're pretty much standard, Lyons said.

The LED lighting is another example of that phenomenon in action.

Jeep Responds to Buyers' Safety Needs

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- 2013 Dodge Journey, 2014 Durango and 2014 Jeep Grand Cherokee mid-size SUVs;
- 2014 Jeep Patriot small SUV.

Three additional 2013 vehicles – the Dodge Dart in the IIHS small-car category and the Dodge Avenger and Chrysler 200 sedans among mid-size, moderately priced cars – share not only Top Safety Pick ratings, but the new IIHS Top Safety Pick+ award for superior performance in a small overlap front crash test, Mayne said.

The 2014 Jeep Cherokee has more than 70 available safety and security features, many of which – such as the Cherokee's 65 percent content-ratio of advanced-technology steel and 10 standard air bags – help protect in the event of collision, Mayne said.

Other key safety features of the Cherokee include:

- Front and rear crumple zones comprising specially formed structural members that absorb energy in a collision, helping protect the occupant cabin;
- Safety cage body structure

to help protect occupants by managing and controlling energy in the event of an impact;

- Side guard door beams, consisting of reinforcement beams inside the doors that increase occupant protection in a side collision;

- Front seat-belt adaptive/active load limiters, which are designed to optimize chest loading in an impact event;

- Reactive head restraints that deploy in the event of a rear collision. They are designed to reduce injuries by minimizing the gap between the head restraint and the occupant's head;

- Front seat-belt pretensioners, which remove slack in the seat belt system, thereby reducing the forward movement of the occupant's head and torso – activated by impact sensors;

- Energy-absorbing steering column, which utilizes two hydroformed coaxial tubes that can move relative to each other, allowing the column to move forward for enhanced energy absorption during a crash. The feature employs a calibrated bending element that deforms during column stroke for optimal energy management.



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