

Despite Weather Issues, Jeep, Chrysler 200 Set Records

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jected at an estimated 15.6 million units Seasonally Adjusted Annual Rate (SAAR).

Overall, January was a good month for Jeep, said Chrysler spokesman Ralph Kisiel. Two Jeep brand models earned a Polk Automotive Loyalty Award in January, the Jeep Grand Cherokee won its fifth award in the Non-Luxury Mid-Size SUV category and the Wrangler nabbed the Non-Luxury Compact SUV award.

The Polk Loyalty Awards recognize manufacturers for superi-

or owner loyalty performance, which is determined when a household that owns a new vehicle returns to market and purchases or leases another new vehicle of the same model or make.

Autobyte.com named the 2014 Grand Cherokee "SUV of the Year" in January, praising its extensive model lineup, refinement and legendary off-road capability, Kisiel said.

Sales of the Chrysler 200 were up 23 percent in January, the mid-size sedan's best-ever January sales.

The new 2015 Chrysler 200, un-

veiled in January during the North American International Auto Show in Detroit, will reach the market during the first half of this year.

Sales of the Dodge Durango full-size SUV were up 22 percent in January compared with the same month a year ago, extend-

ing its run of year-over-year sales gains to 15 consecutive months. It was the Durango's best January sales since 2007.

Dodge brand sales were down 19 percent in January compared with the same month a year ago.

Sales of the Ram pickup truck - Motor Trend Truck of the Year in

2014 and 2013 - were up 22 percent in January, its 45th consecutive month of year-over-year sales gains and its best January sales since 2004.

Sales of the Ram Heavy Duty pickups were up 35 percent, while Ram Light Duty sales increased 17 percent in January.

Heavy Winter Blues Hit GM Dealerships

General Motors dealers delivered 171,486 vehicles in the United States in January.

Retail sales were down 10 percent year over year, although retail deliveries of passenger cars were up slightly. Fleet deliveries declined 18 percent, due to a planned reduction in rental vehicle sales. Total sales were down 12 percent.

"We are building long-term value for our customers and it starts with award-winning new products," said Kurt McNeil, U.S. vice president of Sales Operations.

"We have major launches under way and we are going to accelerate brand-building and other growth initiatives, which include executing our winning strategy to sell more pickup trucks with larger cabs, more features and advanced technology."

Half of GM's light-duty pickup sales in the fourth quarter of 2013 were premium-contented models that transacted at prices of \$40,000 or more, said GM sales reporting spokesman Jim Cain. That compares with about one-third of sales in the 2013 calendar year and 20 percent in 2012. The mix continued to improve in January.

Key features, depending on the model, include superior fuel economy, quieter cabins, higher towing and payload ratings, and better resale value, Cain said. For example, the 2014 Chevrolet Silverado 1500 earned a "Best Resale Value" award from Kelley

Blue Book as one of the Top 10 models in the industry.

Image-building initiatives include prominent advertising during the Super Bowl, the Winter Olympics and the NCAA March Madness/Final Four basketball tournament, Cain said. In addition, the Chevrolet Silverado "Hands-On" Truck tour will visit more than 100 locations this year, with 21 events scheduled for the first quarter.

January sales highlights included Chevrolet sweeping the North American Car and Truck of the Year awards with the Silverado and the Corvette Stingray.

The Chevrolet Cruze and Cadillac SRX had their highest-ever January sales, Cain said.

Retail sales of Chevrolet cars were up 8 percent led by gains for the Sonic, Malibu, Impala and Corvette. Retail deliveries of the Buick Regal and Encore were also up.

Deliveries to commercial fleet customers, which are about 24 percent of total fleet sales, were up 17 percent. GM's commercial fleet business has now posted sales increases in each of the last three months.

The all-new 2015 Chevrolet Tahoe and Suburban, and the GMC Yukon and Yukon XL, began shipping to dealers in late January.

Historically, January is the industry's lowest sales month of the year, Cain said. Extreme winter weather in the South, Midwest and Northeast this January

further depressed GM and industry sales.

The seasonally adjusted annual selling rate (SAAR) for light vehicles is expected to be an estimated 15.3 million units, which is down from 15.6 million in December.

Cain said GM expects light vehicle sales for the year to be in a range of 16 million to 16.5 million units, which would be the industry's best year since 2007, when 16.2 million vehicles were sold. GM expects to earn modestly higher market share in this environment.

GM, Cain said, also expects to grow its commercial fleet business in 2014, thanks to the ongoing launches of the all-new Silverado and GMC Sierra heavy-duty pickups, and the fall launches of the Chevrolet City Express small van, and the Chevrolet Colorado and GMC Canyon midsize pickups. GM expects deliveries to rental companies to be similar to 2013.

Sweeney Named GM's U.S. VP Of Chevrolet

General Motors named Brian Sweeney, currently U.S. vice president, Buick-GMC Sales and Service, to the position of U.S. vice president, Chevrolet.

Sweeney will be responsible for Chevrolet Sales, Service and Marketing in the U.S., effective March 1.

Don Johnson, 56, currently U.S. vice president, Chevrolet Sales and Service, has elected to retire from General Motors after 33 years of service with the company in such diverse market regions as North America, Asia, Latin America, Africa and the Middle East.

"Don has contributed to GM's success in markets around the world, and we wish him and his family well as he concludes his GM career," said Alan Batey, GM executive vice president and president, GM North America and Global Chevrolet.

Duncan Aldred, currently chairman and managing director of Vauxhall Motors and CEO of Opel Ireland, based in Great Britain, has been named U.S. vice president, Buick-GMC. Aldred will be responsible for Buick-GMC Sales, Service and Marketing in the U.S.

Both Sweeney and Aldred report to Steve Hill, vice president, U.S. Sales and Service.

"Chevrolet has some of the freshest products and dealerships in the industry, Buick is bringing new customers into the GM family and GMC is refreshing its entire portfolio over a two-year period," said Hill.

"Brian and Duncan both have a broad understanding of sales and marketing and the right skills to help us delight our current customers and attract new ones."

Sweeney, 46, joined GM in 1990 and held a series of sales and service assignments at GMC, Pontiac and GM Vehicle Sales, Service and Marketing before becoming vice president of Saab Cars USA in 2004.

He became U.S. vice president, Buick-GMC Sales and Service in 2010. Sweeney earned a bachelor's degree from The University



Brian Sweeney

of Detroit Mercy and a master's degree from Central Michigan University.

Aldred, 43, joined GM in 1990 at Vauxhall's Ellesmere Port plant. He worked in various positions in Vauxhall Sales and Marketing before becoming Vauxhall retail sales director in 2004. Following assignments in Hungary and Germany, he was named managing director, Vauxhall Motors, in 2010, and added chairman responsibilities in 2011.

In 2013, Aldred was named acting vice president, Sales, Marketing and Aftersales for Opel/Vauxhall.

Aldred earned a bachelor's degree from Liverpool John Moores University.

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