

Car Shoppers Already Significantly Reacting to Gas Price Increases

CHICAGO, March 16, 2011 /PRNewswire/ -- An analysis of user search data shows that a recent 10 percent increase in fuel prices has driven a nearly 70 percent surge in interest for hybrid vehicles and a 21 percent increase in compact vehicles, Cars.com announced today. Vehicles perceived as gas-guzzlers, like SUV's and pickup trucks, saw declines in interest over the same period.

The same period three years ago saw an almost identical rise in fuel prices, but changes in car shopping behavior were much slower. "What's most interesting about the data is how quickly car buyers have shifted their search habits compared with the same time gas prices started increasing in 2008," says Joe Wiesenfelder, Senior Editor at Cars.com. "Our searches tend to forecast sales trends and I'd say that based on these numbers, hybrids and compacts will be hot sellers in the months to come."

Change in Major Segments: February 9th through March 8th, 2011*	
Hybrids	+69%
Compacts	+21%
Pickup Trucks	-10%
SUVs	-9%

Change in Major Segments: February 9th through March 8th, 2008*	
Hybrids	+25%
Compacts	+7%
Pickup Trucks	-3%
SUVs	-7%

"It seems likely that 2011's summer will see even higher gas prices, and as demand for hybrids and compacts continues to rise, so will prices," said Wiesenfelder. "People looking to buy a car in the very near future should expect thinner inventories of these hot-selling models, and dealerships much less willing to negotiate on price. The best time to buy is now before gas prices rise even further."

For more information on how gas prices are impacting consumer searches on Cars.com, click [here](#).

**Based on percent share of Cars.com searches for vehicles in these segments.*

ABOUT CARS.COM

[Cars.com](#) was recently named the "Best Overall Customer Experience" by Keynote Systems, the world's leading Internet usage research company. Cars.com is an online destination for car shoppers that offers information from consumers and experts to help buyers formulate opinions on what to buy, where to buy and how much to pay for a car. With price listings, side-by-side comparison tools, photo galleries, videos, unbiased editorial content and a large selection of new- and used-car inventory, Cars.com puts millions of car buyers in control of their shopping process with the information they need to make confident buying decisions.

Launched in June 1998, [Cars.com](#) is a division of [Classified Ventures, LLC](#), which is owned by leading media companies, including Belo (NYSE: BLC), Gannett Co., Inc. (NYSE: GCI), The McClatchy Company (NYSE: MNI), Tribune Company and The Washington Post Company (NYSE: WPO).

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