

Vehicle sales impacted by short trading month

New vehicle sales figures released by the Department of Trade and Industry have indicated a market that was impacted by a short selling month and reduced inventory in the wake of industrial action within the automotive sector. Total sales of 54281 vehicles were reported for the month (excluding 505 sales by GWM who do not fully comply with reporting criteria), a number that is 1,5% down on the same month last year.

"The trend seen last month where the light commercial sector showed strength in contrast to the passenger sector was reversed in September," says Brian Olson, GMSA's incoming Vice President of Vehicle Sales, Service, and Marketing. "September sales show a gain of 0,8% over September 2012 for passenger vehicles while the LCV sector is a significant 9,6% down. Factors of influence here are the strength of the rental market during the past month, up 21,6% on September 2012, which buoyed demand for passenger vehicles. In addition, a shortage of inventory in the Light Commercial sector where there is a high percentage of locally manufactured vehicles will have impacted negatively on sales.

"Demand from the private sector remained strong with dealer sales accounting for 78% of sales. Deliveries to rental fleets were up at a high 15% of the total number of vehicles delivered.

"Year-on-year the vehicle market is now running 5% ahead of 2012, pretty much in the forecast range for growth for the year and a level of growth that could see 2013 end up as the third best year on record for the South African automotive industry. Given that there were a number of anomalies in the market during the past month a more relevant indication of the market trend moving ahead to year end should become apparent in October."

GMSA's key passenger vehicle models, the medium sized Chevrolet Cruze and the Chevrolet Spark small car offering continued to fare well with sales of 592 and 718 units respectively. The Chevrolet Trailblazer continued to make its mark on the market with 283 deliveries while the Chevrolet Utility continued to dominate the sub 1-ton light commercial sector with 1329 sales.