

New vehicle sales still taking pain

Although September new vehicle sales were marginally up by about 2% over August, the total sales are still down by nearly 20% over the same month last year.

According to the National Association of Automobile Manufacturers of SA (NAAMSA) 44,725 units were sold in September.

"Cumulative domestic and global economic pressures continue to depress the new vehicle market," says Jacques Brent, Vice President Sales and Marketing, Ford Motor Company of Southern Africa.

"The relative stability indicated by a 2% increase in sales over last month shouldn't be taken as an indication of a turnaround. While that is reassuring, we have been in a similar fluctuating cycle for some months already and we see the current range holding for another eighteen months."

Of the total September sales passenger vehicles accounted for 28,282 units.

Once again, the light commercial vehicle sector was responsible for the volume growth over the previous month's figures with the 13,481 units sold.

The remaining 2,962 units were sold in the Bus, Medium Commercial, Heavy Commercial and Extra Heavy Commercial Vehicle segments.

Despite the ongoing challenging conditions, Ford Motor Company of Southern Africa's sales results outstripped the overall market trend. The 4,751 new vehicles sold by the company is 8% up over the previous month, accounted for by 2,356 passenger vehicles and 2,395 light commercial vehicle sales.

The Ford Ranger was once again the best performing model with 1,174 units registered over the course of the month. Ford's top selling passenger model was the Ford Focus (408 units) while the Mazda2 (570) was the top seller for Mazda.

"Sales for September provided an indication of some stability in the market, but October is expected to pose very real and different challenges with the recent North American market crisis posing a threat to new vehicle sales if the global market sentiment continues to decline as a result," says Brent.