

Brutal winter weather freezes US car sales

CHICAGO, USA: Brutal winter weather chilled US car sales in February, with General Motors and Ford reporting losses even as rival Chrysler extended a winning streak.



Car sales in the US remained flat in February but manufacturers expect conditions to improve as the weather warms up. Image: Ratch0013 [Free Digital Photos](#)

Total industry sales were forecast to come in essentially flat once all car manufacturers have reported, which would be better than the three percent drop posted in January.

The US car industry had been on a year's-long growth spurt as it recovered from a deep downturn following the 2008 financial crisis. Analysts expect that growth to return with better weather.

"When the weather doesn't behave, it has a negative impact on car buyers who are looking for an easy and smooth process at the dealership," said Jessica Caldwell, an analyst with the automotive site [Edmunds.com](#)

"The strength of pent-up demand promises to keep sales on the right path as spring approaches," Caldwell said.

GM's sales fell one percent to 222,104 vehicles in February, but the largest US car manufacturer forecast strong growth in the months ahead.

"Weather continued to impact the industry in February, but GM sales started to thaw during the Winter Olympic Games as our brand and marketing messages took hold," GM sales chief Kurt McNeil said in a statement.

"Despite a slower start to 2014 than most people expected, we look forward to a very successful year, backed by plenty of new products and what should be the strongest GDP growth since the end of the recession," he said.

Ford's sales fell six percent to 183,947 vehicles, in part because deliveries of vehicles to fleet customers were delayed by

the wintry weather.

Chrysler continued to outpace its rivals and posted its 47th consecutive month of gains - and its best February since 2007 - as sales rose 11 percent to 154,866 vehicles.

Source: AFP via I-Net Bridge

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