

# INDUSTRYNEWS

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## **Automotive XPrize Parallels Hot Rods**

In the early days of the automotive performance parts and accessories industry, it was all about competition to see who could go the fastest. The winners were determined on the dry lake beds and the drag strips. Many of those winners went on to be the founding fathers of a new industry in the automotive marketplace.

Now another new group is taking the stage. On April 29, the Progressive Insurance Automotive X PRIZE, will celebrate the start of on-track competition events at a public ceremony at Michigan's state capitol in Lansing. The event will showcase several of the competing vehicles alongside Michigan officials and notable auto industry, business, and government leaders and representatives.

The vehicles that have been entered in the competition seem radical compared to the rest of the automotive industry, but then the vehicles fielded in the early days of the performance parts and accessories industry were radical too.



There are 29 teams that will be represented in Michigan for on-track performance testing from April 26 - July 30. The question that immediately comes to mind is, "in the future, which of these will be seen as the founding fathers of this new industry?"

We also wonder what opportunities the automotive performance parts and accessories industry will find in the new marketplace that is forming around this group. Obviously, there will be those who will want their vehicle to go faster. In fact, "green" racing groups are already forming and competing vehicles. Others will be drawn to customizing these vehicles.



Qualified Teams have passed the second judging stage of the Progressive Insurance Automotive X PRIZE. After acceptance of their Registration Application, these teams have gone on to pass a series of rigorous reviews of their Business Plan and Technical Specifications. They are now working to meet the challenges of the track events.

These competitors come from a variety of backgrounds ranging from large auto manufacturers to

independent backyard inventors. They heard the call to action and decided that they can make a difference.

#### Automotive XPrize Teams

American HyPower  
amp  
APET-X  
Aptera  
BITW Technologies  
Cornell 100+ MPG Team  
Edison2  
Enginer  
Envera  
FVT Racing  
Global-E  
Illuminati Motor Works  
K-Way MOTUS  
Liberty Motors Group  
OptaMotive  
RaceAbout Association  
Spira  
SSI Racing  
Tango (Commuter Cars)  
Tata Motors Limited  
Team EVI  
Team EVX  
Team FourSight  
TW4XP  
Urbee  
West Philly Hybrid X (EVX)  
Western Washington University  
WIKISPEED  
X-Tracer Team Switzerland  
ZAP

Ten million dollars in prizes will be awarded to the teams that win a stage competition for clean, production-capable vehicles that exceed 100 Miles per gallon or energy equivalent (MPGe). The Progressive Insurance Automotive X PRIZE will place a major focus on efficiency, safety, affordability, and the environment. It is about developing real, production-capable cars that consumers will want to buy, not science projects or concept cars. This progress is needed because today's oil consumption is unsustainable and because automotive emissions significantly contribute to global warming and climate change. For more information about the Progressive Insurance Automotive X PRIZE, please visit [www.progressiveautoxprize.org](http://www.progressiveautoxprize.org) or visit [www.xprize.org](http://www.xprize.org).

Source: Progressive Insurance Automotive X Prize, Fast Lane Research

## **Bar Code Advertising Changing Print Advertising**

The New York Acura Association, a group of three leading New York dealers, is bridging the once seemingly unbridgeable gap in advertising between digital ad content and the physical products they represent. It's a leap that advertisers have for years dreamed of making. In this case, a bar code technology called QR (for quick response) which, was developed by Japanese researchers

to index car parts, is positioning the group of Acura dealers to turn both the automotive and advertising industries on their heads.

QR is a square shaped, bar code that can essentially be printed or placed nearly anywhere. The New York Acura Association, a partnership between top U.S. Acura dealers Paragon Acura, Rallye Acura, and Acura of Westchester, announced that it worked with Level5 Advertising, to debut this technology two years ahead of the market. The debut QR Code appeared in the Business section of the New York Times on Wednesday, April 14.

By placing an unobtrusive bit of QR code on a print ad, the Acura dealers will essentially enable print readers to become digital users. Readers can install a QR app on their smartphones, scan the code, and instantly view the relevant online content associated with the code. For example, a car ad in the Sunday paper or a favorite magazine can now be an instant segue to the car maker's website, a video-ad, or even the car's own Facebook page.

For years, advertisers have dreamed of finding a way to connect the physical and digital worlds of advertising. The innovative move offers both the ad industry and the auto industry, a vehicle to navigate the transition from print to pixel, which the world is undergoing at the moment.

Web Sites: [www.paragoncars.com/](http://www.paragoncars.com/)  
[www.rallyeacura.com](http://www.rallyeacura.com)  
[www.acuraofwestchester.com](http://www.acuraofwestchester.com)  
For more information on QR Code Advertising, visit <http://l5digital.com/contact-us.html>.



Source: Paragon Auto Group

## Most Exciting New Cars For Spring 2010

On April 16, NADAguides.com revealed its picks for the most exciting cars for spring 2010. With the New York International Auto Show serving as the launching pad for what's to come in 2011, many car companies are moving forward with new advancements in hybrid technology and fuel efficiency while introducing several affordable luxury amenities. New economic news also proves that automotive manufacturers have turned the corner and are again bringing innovative ideas into production to suit economical demands. The standout cars this spring are focused on being kind to both the environment and the wallet.

### 2011 Jeep Grand Cherokee

With numerous performance options and interior refinements, the 2011 Jeep Grand Cherokee should help Chrysler gain market share in the SUV arena. Grand Cherokee loyalists will have their choice between the 3.6-liter Pentastar V6 that delivers 280 hp and 260 lb.-ft. of torque or the 5.7-liter HEMI V8 engine that produces 360 hp and 390 lb.-ft. of torque. For comfort both on- and off-road, the 2011 Grand Cherokee can be outfitted with a heated steering wheel, heated and cooled front seats, heated rear seats, rain-sensing wipers, keyless



entry, a backup camera, a power tilting and telescoping steering wheel, and a power rear hatch. An available panoramic sunroof is an addition for the 2011 Grand Cherokee and fuses two panes of glass together to let the light shine in on front and rear passengers. The list of standard safety equipment includes electronic traction control and stability control with roll mitigation, making it suitable for carpooling on the weekdays and off-roading on the weekends. Scheduled to launch in July, starting prices will be in the low-\$30,000 range.

#### 2011 Nissan Juke

Nissan's newest sport crossover, the Juke, received its influence from the Rogue and encompasses a highly distinctive design including a robust stance, high waistline, complex curves, coupe-like profile and aggressive wheels and tires. The interior design features a wide center console that takes its inspiration from a motorcycle fuel tank of all things. The Juke's powerplant is a turbocharged, 1.6-liter, four-cylinder engine which puts out nearly 180 hp and 170 lb.-ft. of torque, and the optional i-CON packaging allows drivers to choose between economy, sport, and normal settings to tailor the car to their driving preferences. Starting at around \$20,000, the Juke will surely make an impact on crossover lovers looking for something sporty and fun.



#### 2011 Ford Mustang

Recently named the 2010 NADAguides.com Car of the Month for April, the all-new Ford Mustang is highlighted by significant powertrain enhancements with a class-leading 305 hp, 3.7-liter V6 model. Boasting impressive horsepower figures is one thing, but backing it up with fuel efficiency is another. The V6 gets 19 city and 31 highway mpg. The 5.0-liter V8 produces 412 hp while still maintaining 26 mpg on the highway - a first for the Mustang. Both can be had with a six-speed manual or automatic transmission. Joining its timeless design with the latest technology adds to the convenience and safety of the 2011 Mustang, from the availability of the latest version of Ford SYNC®, with applications such as Traffic, Directions and Information, 911 Assist™ and Vehicle Health Report, to standard AdvanceTrac® Electronic Stability Control, which complements the all-speed traction control and standard Anti-lock Braking System (ABS). Pair all that with a starting price of \$22,145 for the V6 and \$29,645 for the V8, the 2011 Ford Mustang is a definite must-see for the classic car lover.



### 2011 Hyundai Equus

Hyundai's latest addition to the luxury vehicle market is now posing even stronger competition for the likes of Mercedes and Lexus. With a 4.6-liter V8 delivering 378 hp and 324 lb.-ft. of torque and fuel efficiency at 16 mpg in the city and 24 mpg on highway, the performance benchmarks are pointedly exceeded and worth a second look; both the Lexus LS and Mercedes-Benz S-Class V8 sedans have slightly lower horsepower and gas mileage numbers. In addition, an air suspension is standard as is electric power steering and the usual host of safety features such as nine airbags including curtain airbags, stability control, and active headrests. Luxury touches include LED lighting, wood trim, navigation, a Lexicon audio system with XM-HD radio, and Bluetooth connectivity. Adaptive cruise control is offered, and a front camera can be paired with the rearview safety camera and parking sensors. The most expensive Hyundai vehicle will start in the mid-\$50,000 range.



### 2011 Porsche Cayenne S Hybrid

Porsche's first production hybrid has been well received and is noteworthy for loyalists who are looking for power and presence while lowering their carbon footprint. The Cayenne S Hybrid features a 333 hp 3.0-liter supercharged V6 churning out 428 lb.-ft. of torque paired with a 47 hp electric engine allowing the thoroughbred to run up to 97 mph on only electric power for short distances. Upon pressing the pedal, it will go from a standing start up to 35 miles per hour before seeking help from the gas engine. However, by decoupling the engine from the electric motor via an innovative automatic transmission, the Cayenne S Hybrid allows drivers to switch off the gas engine and run on pure electricity while cruising down the highway, and the eight-speed transmission is supplemented by a Hybrid Controller system on the interior that shows which system the car is running in. The Porsche Cayenne S Hybrid is truly unique and with a starting price under \$70,000, it's the luxury solution for eco-friendly drivers who want to save the world in style.



*SOURCE NADAguides.com*

## Most Eco Friendly Car Shopping Cities

With the 40th anniversary of Earth Day approaching, Cars.com evaluated car shopping behavior nationwide to name the most eco-friendly cities. In the site's 3rd annual Green Cities Index, San Francisco topped the charts, beating out all other cities based on its interest in hybrid vehicles as a percentage of total car shopping activity on Cars.com.

"This Earth Day, there is a lot for car shoppers to celebrate, including the release of the Chevy Volt and the Nissan Leaf electric vehicles," said Cars.com Editor in Chief, Patrick Olsen. "While these new environmental darlings have yet to hit the market, eco-conscious shoppers already have more hybrid options to choose from than ever before and buying a more environmentally friendly vehicle has never been easier. Green Cities takes a look at the cities where these options are most engaging consumers."

Like last year, West Coast shoppers showed the greatest interest in hybrid vehicles. Last year's winner, Eugene, Ore., dropped to fourth. The lone cities outside of California that made the top

ten are Glendive, Mont., Madison, Wis. and Gainesville, Fla. The South continues to lag behind most major cities in the country in embracing hybrid vehicles. For the second straight year, Laredo, Texas, had the dubious distinction of being last on our list.

"Outside the West Coast, smaller towns across the country with large state universities continue to show larger than normal interest in hybrid cars," Olsen said. "Madison, Wis., home to the University of Wisconsin; Gainesville, Fla., home to the University of Florida; and Charlottesville, Va., home to the University of Virginia all appear in the top 15."

2010 Green Cities Ranking - Greatest Hybrid Shopping Activity as a Percent of Vehicle Search on Cars.com:

- 1 San Francisco - Oakland - San Jose
- 2 Eureka, CA
- 3 Portland, OR
- 4 Eugene, OR
- 5 Glendive, MT
- 6 Santa Barbara - Santa Maria - San Luis Obispo, CA
- 7 Seattle - Tacoma, WA
- 8 Madison, WI
- 9 San Diego, CA
- 10 Gainesville, FL
- 11 Monterey - Salinas, CA
- 12 Chico - Redding, CA
- 13 Bend, OR
- 14 Charlottesville, VA
- 15 Sacramento - Stockton - Modesto, CA
- 16 Salt Lake City, UT
- 17 Medford - Klamath Falls
- 18 Fairbanks, Alaska
- 19 Missoula, MT
- 20 Washington DC (Hagerstown)
- 21 Denver
- 22 Austin, TX
- 23 Rochester - Mason City - Austin
- 24 Minneapolis - Saint Paul
- 25 Boise, ID
- 26 Los Angeles
- 27 La Crosse - Eau Claire, WI
- 28 Tucson (Sierra Vista), AZ
- 29 Boston
- 30 Phoenix
- 31 Burlington - Plattsburgh, VT
- 32 Mankato, MN
- 33 Bangor, ME
- 34 Helena, MT
- 35 Lansing, MI
- 36 Juneau, AK
- 37 Raleigh - Durham (Fayetteville), NC
- 38 Lexington, KY
- 39 Columbia - Jefferson City, MO
- 40 Butte - Bozeman, MT
- 41 Portland - Auburn, ME
- 42 Cedar Rapids - Waterloo & Dubuque, IA
- 43 Honolulu - HI
- 44 Palm Springs, CA

45 Fresno - Visalia, CA  
46 Harrisonburg, VA  
47 Lafayette, IN  
48 Bakersfield, CA  
49 Twin Falls, ID  
50 Reno, NV  
51 Yakima - Pasco - Richland - Kennewick, WA  
52 Springfield - Holyoke, MA  
53 Syracuse, NY  
54 Roanoke - Lynchburg, VA  
55 Kansas City  
56 Rapid City, SD  
57 Las Vegas, NV  
58 Spokane, WA  
59 Green Bay - Appleton, WI  
60 Albany - Schenectady - Troy, NY  
61 Evansville, IN  
62 Albuquerque - Santa Fe, NM  
63 Idaho Falls - Pocatello, ID  
64 Cincinnati  
65 Des Moines - Ames, IA  
66 Springfield, MO  
67 Tallahassee - Thomasville, FL  
68 South Bend - Elkhart, IN  
69 Birmingham (Anniston and Tuscaloosa), AL  
70 Sioux Falls (Mitchell), SD  
71 Billings, MT  
72 Anchorage, AK  
73 Richmond - Petersburg, VA  
74 Peoria - Bloomington, IL  
75 Providence - New Bedford, RI  
76 Fargo - Valley City, ND  
77 Chicago  
78 Norfolk - Portsmouth - Newport News, VA  
79 Davenport - Rock Island - Moline, IA  
80 Saint Louis  
81 Milwaukee, WI  
82 Tulsa, OK  
83 Jonesboro, AR  
84 Nashville, TN  
85 Omaha, NE  
86 Charlotte, NC  
87 Indianapolis  
88 Wilmington, NC  
89 Columbus, OH  
90 Dallas - Fort Worth  
91 Champaign & Springfield - Decatur, IL  
92 Panama City, FL  
93 Fort Wayne, IN  
94 Orlando - Daytona Beach - Melbourne, FL  
95 Grand Rapids - Kalamazoo - Battle Creek, MI  
96 Fort Myers - Naples, FL  
97 Fort Smith - Fayetteville - Springdale - Rogers, AR  
98 Colorado Springs - Pueblo, CO  
99 Youngstown, OH  
100 Salisbury, MD

101 Lincoln & Hastings - Kearney, NE  
102 Knoxville, TN  
103 Baltimore, MD  
104 Dayton, OH  
105 Cheyenne - Scottsbluff, WY  
106 Watertown, NY  
107 Binghamton, NY  
108 Louisville, KY  
109 Topeka, KA  
110 Columbia, SC  
111 Greensboro - High Point - Winston-Salem, NC  
112 Jacksonville, FL  
113 West Palm Beach - Fort Pierce, FL  
114 Chattanooga, TN  
115 Tampa - Saint Petersburg (Sarasota), FL  
116 Johnstown - Altoona, PA  
117 Jackson, TN  
118 Rockford, IL  
119 Atlanta  
120 Oklahoma City, OK  
121 Hartford & New Haven, CT  
122 Mobile - Pensacola (Fort Walton Beach), AL  
123 Greenville - Spartanburg - Asheville - Anderson, SC  
124 Lubbock, TX  
125 Wausau - Rhinelander, WI  
126 Philadelphia  
127 Presque Isle, ME  
128 North Platte, VA  
129 Cleveland, OH  
130 Greenville - New Bern - Washington, NC  
131 Terre Haute, IN  
132 Harrisburg - Lancaster - Lebanon - York, PA  
133 New York  
134 Saint Joseph, MO  
135 Pittsburgh  
136 Rochester, NY  
137 Great Falls, MT  
138 Parkersburg, WV  
139 Little Rock - Pine Bluff, AR  
140 Detroit  
141 Grand Junction - Montrose, CO  
142 Joplin - Pittsburg, MO  
143 San Antonio, TX  
144 Toledo, OH  
145 Duluth - Superior, MN  
146 Wichita - Hutchinson, KS  
147 Houston  
148 Paducah - Cape Girardeau - Harrisburg - Mt Vernon, KY  
149 Utica, NY  
150 Buffalo, NY  
151 Huntsville - Decatur (Florence), IL  
152 Traverse City - Cadillac, MI  
153 Dothan, AL  
154 Charleston, SC  
155 Miami - Fort Lauderdale  
156 Marquette, MI



157 Minot - Bismarck - Dickinson, ND  
158 Wichita Falls & Lawton, KS  
159 Beaumont - Port Arthur, TX  
160 Columbus - Tupelo - West Point, MS  
161 Bowling Green, KY  
162 Memphis, TN  
163 Casper - Riverton, WY  
164 Tyler - Longview (Lufkin & Nacogdoches), TX  
165 Amarillo, TX  
166 Flint - Saginaw - Bay City, MI  
167 Sherman - Ada, TX  
168 Elmira, NY  
169 Augusta, GA  
170 Ottumwa - Kirksville, IA  
171 Savannah, GA  
172 Columbus, GA  
173 Sioux City, IA  
174 Waco - Temple - Bryan, TX  
175 Lima, OH  
176 Zanesville, OH  
177 Yuma - El Centro, AZ  
178 Biloxi - Gulfport, MS  
179 Wilkes Barre - Scranton, PA  
180 Baton Rouge, LA  
181 Macon, GA  
182 Tri-Cities, TN-VA  
183 Montgomery (Selma), AL  
184 New Orleans  
185 Florence - Myrtle Beach, SC  
186 Clarksburg - Weston, WV  
187 Quincy - Hannibal - Keokuk, IL  
188 Abilene - Sweetwater, TX  
189 Albany, GA  
190 Charleston-Huntington, WV  
191 Alexandria, LA  
192 Odessa - Midland, TX  
193 Wheeling - Steubenville, OH  
194 San Angelo, TX  
195 Bluefield - Beckley - Oak Hill, KY  
196 Erie, PA  
197 Monroe - El Dorado, AR  
198 Lake Charles, LA  
199 El Paso, TX  
200 Meridian, MS  
201 Harlingen - Weslaco - Brownsville - McAllen, TX  
202 Lafayette, LA  
203 Shreveport, LA  
204 Corpus Christi, TX  
205 Jackson, MS  
206 Hattiesburg - Laurel, MS  
207 Alpena, MI  
208 Victoria, TX  
209 Greenwood - Greenville, MS  
210 Laredo, TX

SOURCE Cars.com

## **April New Vehicle Sales Maintain Positive Trend**

Building on the momentum from last month, April's retail selling rate is expected to improve slightly, supported by increased shopping early in the month and incentive programs, according to J.D. Power and Associates, which gathers real-time transaction data from more than 8,900 retail franchise points across the United States.

J.D. Power and Associates expect April new-vehicle retail sales to come in at 804,200 units, which represents a seasonally adjusted annualized rate (SAAR) of 9.8 million units. Compared with April 2009, retail sales are projected to increase by 22% in April 2010 and the selling rate is expected to increase by 1.8 million units.

"While new-vehicle retail sales in April are benefitting from the continuation of March's incentive programs, average incentives per vehicle are substantially lower, at \$2,800, compared with \$3,400 one year ago," said Jeff Schuster, executive director of global forecasting at J.D. Power and Associates. "Compared with March, incentives are down by approximately \$200, which suggests that the likelihood of an outright incentive war is now lower. This decline in incentives, due to a lower percentage of previous-year models in inventory this year, and the upturn in volume from last April have created a healthier environment -- which is consistent with the improved first-quarter financials being reported."

According to TrueCar.com, industry average incentive spending per unit will be approximately \$2,800 in April, which represents no change from March 2010 but down 4.4% from this time last year.

In comparison, TrueCar.com forecasted that April 2010 light vehicle sales (including fleet) in the U.S. is expected to be 1,010,059 units, a drop of 5% from March 2010, but an increase of more than 23% from this time last year. April's forecast translates into a SAAR level of 11.5 million new car sales.

"The automotive industry is in full-blown recovery. In fact, we can expect to see SAAR numbers reaching and exceeding 12 million as we stretch into the summer months," said Jesse Toprak, VP of Industry Trends and Insight for TrueCar.com. "Toyota's generous incentives in April continue to bring consumers back into dealerships; however, the impact of its incentive programs in the marketplace appears to have diminished slightly in April."

According to J.D. Power and Associates, fleet sales are expected to pull back slightly from the strong pace in the first quarter of 2010, but remain significantly higher than one year ago. Fleet volume is forecasted to total 205,000 units for the month-up 28% from April 2009. Total light-vehicle sales for April are projected to come in at 1,008,800 units-an increase of 23%, compared with one year ago.

April's total SAAR is projected by J.D. Power and Associates to come in at 11.5 million units, down slightly from March, which reflects a normalization in the fleet mix to 20% from higher levels earlier this year.

TrueCar.com forecasts unit sales by the top seven manufacturers for April 2010 of:

Unit Sales Forecast			
Manufacturer	April 2010 Forecast	Change vs. March 2010	Change vs. April 2009
Chrysler	84,902	- 8.3%	10.7%
Ford	171,086	- 4.0%	32.1%
General Motors	176,086	- 6.2%	3.4%
Honda	111,221	2.7%	10.1%
Nissan	85,175	- 10.8%	80.5%
Toyota	175,471	- 6.1%	38.7%
Hyundai/Kia	75,161	- 3.0%	26.2%
Source: TrueCar.com			

While the sales pace remains stronger than at the start of the year, the economy is in an uncharacteristically slow recovery, which results in continued mixed signals. In addition, the manufacturing sector, including the auto industry, is still rebuilding diminished inventory levels. Given these offsetting factors, J.D. Power and Associates' sales forecast for 2010 remains at 11.7 million units for total sales and 9.6 million units for retail sales.

"Consumer confidence has recently picked up, but it remains low, due in part to an unemployment level still at 9.7 percent," said Schuster. "However, the outlook is improved from where it was at the end of 2009, and the industry is now able to focus on moving forward, rather than worrying about surviving."

Source: J.D. Power and Associates, TrueCar.com

### Hot Links - Top Automotive Stories from the Web

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[Car Tech Trends for 2010 — and Beyond](#)

[Ford Takes Over Europe, Becomes Best Selling Brand](#)

[The First 'Motorcycle' Heads for Auction](#)

[Citroen Metropolis Concept inspired by China](#)

[Volkswagen unveils electric Milano Taxi concept](#)

[Alfa Romeo returns to the U.S. with an invasion of new models](#)