Kelley Blue Book
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BLUE BOOK BRIEFING

JULY 2014

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What Price Safety?

- Jack R. Nerad, Executive Editorial Director for Kelley Blue Book's KBB.com

Many of us who review vehicles for a living have concluded that the past few years have been the Golden Age of the automobile. It seems each new vehicle offers innovation, trumping all that has come before in packages that very often are beautifully designed and meticulously crafted. What is not as heavily reported – but at least equally true – is the past few years also have represented the Golden Age of automobile safety. Fatal crashes, vehicle fatalities and injury rates in the United States dipped to a historic low in 2011 and rose only slightly in 2012, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. The years 2009, 2010 and 2011 might well have been the safest for American drivers and auto passengers since the automobile became commonplace nearly 100 years ago.

> THE VEHICLES CONSUMERS DRIVE TODAY ARE REMARKABLE IN THEIR ABILITIES TO HELP DRIVERS AND PASSENGERS SURVIVE AND AVOID CRASHES, AND INJURIES RELATED TO CRASHES...
> *- JACK R. NERAD*

While it might not be the takeaway the consumer gets from viewing the testimony of General Motors executives in Senate hearings explaining the company's safety recalls, the vehicles consumers drive today are remarkable in their abilities to help drivers and passengers survive and avoid crashes, and injuries related to crashes. Engineers continue to find better ways to construct passenger cabins to avoid fatality-causing intrusions, and at the same time, engineers are finding new and creative ways to add airbags and other lines of defense to provide new levels of protection against the life-threatening possibilities of violent collisions.

While the advances in "passive safety" have been remarkable, the advances in "active safety" devices have been even more remarkable. Every day I am treated to the wonder of the rear-view backup camera system, and I'm reminded of the additional level of safety it provides. It will be a blessing when they are installed on all light vehicles in America in 2018. Other electronic safety aids are not nearly as obvious, yet each has made us collectively safer. For more than a decade, I have been a strong advocate of electronic stability control systems. More recently, those systems have been supplemented by others that include cross-traffic alert, lane-departure warning and correction, and active cruise control now with the added benefit of auto stop. In the very near future, the typical family car could be equipped with systems that could make them significantly safer than they already are. In essence, in many situations, the car itself would be better equipped to deal with emergency situations and gain a positive result than the human behind the steering wheel.

Which is why I was so disappointed to hear from a source at the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration the sum of money its research suggests the typical car-buyer is willing to pay for added safety systems. That sum, the price consumers say they will pay for technology to protect precious lives from the physical laws that govern travel in high-speed conveyances like automobiles, is zero. Nothing. Nada. Consumers want it; they believe they should have it; but they don't want to pay for it. In fact, when Kelley Blue Book's research team surveyed in-market shoppers, the results indicated consumers who place a high importance on safety are not willing to pay any more for their next vehicle than consumers who don't identify safety as a primary consideration. [1] Sadly, that reflects an attitude pervasive in our society that extends far beyond the auto industry. Perhaps the best things in life are free, but many other benefits also bear costs. Saving lives seems to us like a benefit worth paying for. Apparently persuasion is necessary before consumers will agree.

[1] KBB.com BrandWatch Survey, Q2 2014

LATEST NEWS STORIES ON KBB.COM:

Check out the very latest news stories by visiting KBB.com and clicking the the *KBB.com Top Picks* tab on the home page. The following latest news stories by KBB.com's editorial staff went live on the site or were updated June to July 2014.

Video Posted to KBB.com:

2014 Honda Civic vs. 2014 Toyota Corolla

2014 Midsize Sedan Comparison Test

Certified Pre-Owned Programs Explained

In 60 Seconds or Less: 2015 Alfa Romeo 4C

Nissan Versa Note is a subcompact standout (VIDEO)

Video Review: 2015 Alfa Romeo 4C

Video Review: 2014 Mercedes-Benz S-Class

Written Stories Posted to KBB.com:

Highlights:

2014 Midsize-Sedan Comparison Test: A Flavor for Every Palate

2015 Subaru Legacy: Finally, a Contender

2014 Chevrolet Malibu: Better Than Before, But Still Needs More

2014 Ford Fusion SE: Utility, Plus a Little Something Extra

2014 Honda Accord: It's Good to Be King

2014 Kia Optima EX: Lots of Features, Not Lots of Fun

2014 Mazda Mazda6: Sportiness Doesn't Trump Utility

2014 Nissan Altima 2.5 SV: Solid Alternative to the Mainstream

2014 Range Rover Sport: The 'Can It Really Do It All?' Test

2014 Toyota Camry: Old Guys Rule

10 Best Certified Pre-Owned Luxury Cars Under $30,000

10 Best Certified Pre-Owned Luxury Cars Under $30,000: 2011 BMW 3 Series

10 Best Certified Pre-Owned Luxury Cars Under $30,000: 2011 Lexus ES

10 Best Certified Pre-Owned Luxury Cars Under $30,000: 2011 Acura TL

10 Best Certified Pre-Owned Luxury Cars Under $30,000: 2011 Audi A6

10 Best Certified Pre-Owned Luxury Cars Under $30,000: 2011 Cadillac CTS

10 Best Certified Pre-Owned Luxury Cars Under $30,000: 2011 Infiniti G

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10 Best Certified Pre-Owned Luxury Cars Under $30,000: 2011 Volvo XC60

10 Best Certified Pre-Owned Luxury Cars Under $30,000: 2011 Audi A4

10 Coolest Cars Under $18,000

10 Coolest Cars Under $18,000: 2014 Mazda Mazda3

10 Coolest Cars Under $18,000: 2014 Hyundai Veloster

10 Coolest Cars Under $18,000: 2014 Kia Soul

10 Coolest Cars Under $18,000: 2014 Honda Civic Coupe

10 Coolest Cars Under $18,000: 2014 Volkswagen Jetta

10 Coolest Cars Under $18,000: 2014 Fiat 500

10 Coolest Cars Under $18,000: 2014 Dodge Dart

10 Coolest Cars Under $18,000: 2014 Ford Fiesta

10 Coolest Cars Under $18,000: 2014 Chevrolet Sonic

10 Coolest Cars Under $18,000: 2014 Nissan Versa Note

Class of 2015: New Vehicles Ready to Roll

Class of 2014: The All-New Cars

Can you identify these four German sedans...from the inside?

Fuel Economy Stars: A Car Buying Guide

Going Back in Time: 2005 Acura NSX Impressions

Should you buy a Toyota Corolla or a Honda Civic?

LATEST NEWS STORIES ON KBB.COM CONTINUED:

Vehicle Coverage:

2015 BMW M3 and M4 First Review

2015 Chrysler 200C Quick Take

2015 GMC Yukon SLT Quick Take

2015 Hyundai Genesis 5.0 Quick Take

2015 Hyundai Sonata First Review: Going in a new direction

2015 Subaru Outback First Review

2014 Bentley Continental GT V8 S Quick Take: Subtle Luxury

2014 Chevrolet Camaro Z/28 First Review: Return of the King

2014 Ford F-150 Tremor Quick Take: Sport Truck Fun

2014 Mercedes-Benz G63 AMG Quick Take

2014 Porsche Panamera S E-Hybrid Quick Take

Editors' Page:

Editors' Page: 2015 Mazda CX-5

Editors' Page: 2015 Subaru Forester

Editors' Page: 2015 Subaru Legacy

Editors' Page: 2014 Chevrolet Malibu

Editors' Page: 2014 Dodge Avenger

Editors' Page: 2014 Ford Fusion

Editors' Page: 2014 Honda Accord

Editors' Page: 2014 Hyundai Sonata

Editors' Page: 2014 Kia Optima

Editors' Page: 2014 Mazda6

Editors' Page: 2014 Nissan Altima

Latest News:

2016 Audi U.S. models will offer Apple CarPlay

2016 Mazda MX-5 Miata to get global unveiling on September 4th

2016 Mercedes-AMG GT will have a 503-horsepower twin-turbo V8

2016 Smart Fortwo and Forfour teased

2016 Volvo XC90 T8 Twin Engine hybrid shown

2015 Acura ILX pricing starts at $27,945, Hybrid variant dropped

2015 Acura TLX to start at $31,890

2015 Audi S3 Sedan, A3 Cabrio, A3 TDI Sedan priced and detailed

2015 Bentley Continental GT3-R brings race pace to the road

2015 Cadillac CTS Sedan teased

2015 Dodge Challenger SRT Hellcat: 707 official horsepower

2015 Ford Edge unveiled -- upping its game on every level

2015 Ford Explorer updates include new XLT Appearance Package

2015 Ford Focus ST bows in England

2015 Ford Mustang features next-gen knee airbag

2015 GMC Sierra Denali boasts first truck use of magnetic ride

2015 Jeep Cherokee and Chrysler 200 share standard stop start

2015 Hyundai Sonata Eco to offer 38 mpg on the highway

2015 Hyundai Tucson Fuel Cell enters the hydrogen highway

2015 Mercedes-Benz C-Class production begins in Alabama

2015 Mercedes-Benz CLS-Class adds new CLS400 and 9-speed auto

2015 Mini John Cooper Works Paceman bows

2015 Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution lives on

2015 McLaren MSO 650S Spider debuts at Goodwood

2015 Ram ProMaster City unveiled

2015 Toyota FCV Fuel Cell set for U.S. debut

2014 Volkswagen Beetle adds premium package

Aston Martin Design Prototype 100 Vision Gran Turismo revealed

Audi to use lightweight composite springs

BMW and Daimler team on wireless EV charging

Chrysler Group adds 5-year SiriusXM upgrade

Dodge turns 100 years old and throws a classic celebration

European 2015 Volkswagen Passat hints at next-gen U.S. model

Jaguar F-Type Project 7 set for limited production

Jaguar Land Rover Ingenium engines detailed

Maserati Centennial Exhibition opens in Modena

Nissan and Daimler Joint Venture: Hecho in Mexico

Nissan Concept 2020 Vision Gran Turismo unveiled

Volkswagen Beetle Dune coming to America in 2016

Volkswagen Beetle GRC racer has 544 hp, hits 60 mph in 2.1 seconds

NEW-VEHICLE REVIEWS ON KBB.COM:

The following new-vehicle reviews written by KBB.com's editorial staff went live on the site or were updated June to July 2014. To see any new-vehicle reviews from KBB.com's editorial staff, please visit *KBB.com* and click on the *Car Reviews* tab, then select the make and model.

New Vehicle Reviews:

2015 Acura ILX

The ILX not only looks great but it packs a lot into its compact size and all for a price below its competitors.

2015 Acura MDX

Long considered a reliable luxury crossover, the MDX not only seats up to 7 passengers but also offers a driving experience that rivals a sport sedan.

2015 BMW M3

The M3 is a practical luxury sport sedan that delivers on driving involvement and also holds the top spot for super-fast acceleration.

2015 Buick Lacrosse

A credible alternative to the me-too competitors of the entry-level luxury car segment, the LaCrosse is a handsome, capable and well equipped sedan.

2015 Chevrolet Camaro

A portrait of attitude and aggressiveness, the Camaro is a musclecar that delivers on speed and thrills.

2015 Ford Expedition

Still very much in the game, 2015 Ford Expedition offers a more fuel efficient engine plus numerous design and interior updates to help keep up with the other full-size beasts in its segment.

2015 Ford Explorer

The Ford Explorer is still a tough act to follow.

2015 Ford Taurus

The Ford Taurus is classic American big-car motoring with lots of space and easy driving manners.

2015 Ford Transit

The all-new Ford Transit is a van with many possible configurations that can haul lots of things or lots of people.

2015 GMC Acadia

Rugged exterior, a spacious cargo area, and near-Cadillac-like luxury make the Acadia an excellent SUV choice.

2015 Honda Pilot

A caravan for the masses with seating for eight and exceptional maneuverability through everyday traffic and tight parking lots.

2015 Hyundai Elantra

The Hyundai Elantra is a sharp-looking compact that will please both practical and enthusiast drivers.

2015 Infiniti QX70

Still sleek, low and fast the QX70 is considered one of the best driving luxury SUVs around.

2015 Jaguar XF

The 2015 Jaguar XF brings style, new interior accommodations and an abundance of engine choices.

NEW-VEHICLE REVIEWS ON KBB.COM CONTINUED:

2015 Lincoln MKC

Endowed with exquisite refinement and performance, the MKC also offers great comfort and solid handling plus a plethora of luxury features.

2015 Mitsubishi Mirage

Tiny in size but big on fuel economy, the Mirage is a noteworthy little 4-door.

2015 Mitsubishi Outlander

The Mitsubishi Outlander is a serious contender that stands out among the crowd with subtle styling and impressive features.

2015 Subaru BRZ

The BRZ delivers precision steering, excellent chassis and suspension, plus sheer playfulness.

2015 Subaru Outback

With a main appeal for the outdoorsy types, the Outback is also versatile enough to handle in town excursions to the store, office or little league practice.

2015 Volkswagen Golf

The Golf has grown into a family of 2-door and 4-door hatchbacks that offer utility, decent fuel economy and a fun-to-drive spirit.

2014 BMW i8

A sports car for today's more progressive driving enthusiast.

2014 Maserati Quattroporte

The Quattroporte is an Italian feast of sensory delights.

2014 Mercedes-Benz B-Class

A uniquely Mercedes driving experience, the B-Class also exudes handsomeness and refinement at a surprisingly reasonable price.

WHAT'S NEW:

Affordable Variety of New Car Fuel Economy Stars

IRVINE, Calif., July 18, 2014 -- For shoppers in the market for a fuel-efficient new car, the choices have never been better. While not that long ago attaining high mileage often meant compromising elsewhere, today's fuel-economy standouts also rise to the top for their creature comforts, good ride quality and interior flexibility. Best of all, it doesn't have to break the bank to own one. Whether a shopper is looking for a hybrid, an all-electric car, a diesel-powered sedan or even a car that runs on compressed natural gas, the class of 2014 and the up-and-coming class of 2015 have produced more than 40 fuel efficient cars that start under $36,000, which Kelley Blue Book's KBB.com editors detail in Fuel-Economy Stars: A Car Buying Guide... *MORE*

10 Best New-Car Deals for July Announced by KBB.com

Kelley Blue Book Ranks Month's Best Lease, Financing, Cash Back Deals

IRVINE, Calif., July 17, 2014 -- Summer is a hot time to get a great deal on a new car, so the experts from Kelley Blue Book www.kbb.com, the only vehicle valuation and information source trusted and relied upon by both consumers and the automotive industry, have assembled their list of the 10 best lease, financing and cash back deals available in July from a variety of auto manufacturers... *MORE*

New-Car Buyer's Guides Help Shoppers Decide Which Vehicle Right for Them

IRVINE, Calif., July 15, 2014 -- The process of buying a new car can be quite an overwhelming task, even though the end result is exciting. A new car is one of the largest purchase decisions one makes in life, and shoppers want confidence that they are choosing not only the right vehicle segment for them, but also the specific model that best suits their needs, before shelling out their hard-earned money. But with so many great options to choose from, how is one to know which one is best? New-car shoppers can check out segment information, vehicle details, model comparisons, and helpful advice from the editors of Kelley Blue Book in all-new segment-based Buyer's Guides on KBB.com... *MORE*

New-Car Transaction Prices Climb More Than 1 Percent in June 2014, According to Kelley Blue Book

Most Major Automakers Show Positive Growth on Strength of Utility Vehicle Segments

IRVINE, Calif., July 1, 2014 -- The data analysts at Kelley Blue Book www.kbb.com, the only vehicle valuation and information source trusted and relied upon by both consumers and the automotive industry, today report the estimated average transaction price (ATP) for light vehicles in the United States was $32,342 in June 2014. New-car prices have increased by $454 (up 1.4 percent) from June 2013, while increasing $113 (0.4 percent) from last month... *MORE*

New-Car Sales to Fall 2.7 Percent Year-Over-Year in June, Climb 5.5 Percent for Q2 2014

Kelley Blue Book Ranks Hot Lease, Financing, Cash Back Deals, From Fuel-Efficient Rides to Three-Row SUVs

IRVINE, Calif., June 27, 2014 -- New-vehicle sales are expected to fall 2.7 percent year-over-year to a total of 1.36 million units, resulting in an estimated 16.3 million seasonally adjusted annual rate (SAAR), according to Kelley Blue Book www.kbb.com, the only vehicle valuation and information source trusted and relied upon by both consumers and the automotive industry... *MORE*

10 Coolest New Cars Under $18,000 Of 2014 Named by KBB.com

No. 1 for 2014 Mazda3 Featured on KBB.com's Annual List Every Year of Vehicle's 11-Year Existence

IRVINE, Calif., June 27, 2014 -- Affordable new cars have never been so cool, as detailed in this year's list of the 10 Coolest Cars Under $18,000, hand-selected by the expert editors at Kelley Blue Book www.kbb.com, the only vehicle valuation and information source trusted and relied upon by both consumers and the automotive industry. The redesigned Mazda3 is No. 1 for 2014, and it notably has been featured on KBB.com's annual affordable 'cool cars' list every year of the vehicle's 11-year existence... *MORE*

10 Best Certified Pre-Owned Luxury Cars Under $30,000 of 2014 Named by KBB.com

Kelley Blue Book Expert Editors Rank 2011 BMW 3 Series No. 1

IRVINE, Calif., June 26, 2014 -- Automaker Certified Pre-Owned (CPO) programs make it possible to get your hands on a used luxury car for the price of a new mainstream model, with the comfort that comes from a thorough inspection and extended coverage beyond the original warranty. To help shoppers narrow down their choices, the editors at Kelley Blue Book www.kbb.com, the only vehicle valuation and information source trusted and relied upon by both consumers and the automotive industry, have named this year's 10 Best Certified Pre-Owned Luxury Cars Under $30,000... *MORE*

KBB.com Releases 2014 Midsize Sedan Comparison Test

Eight Top Vehicles in Popular Segment Evaluated by Kelley Blue Book Experts

IRVINE, Calif., June 25, 2014 -- The expert editors of Kelley Blue Book www.kbb.com, the only vehicle valuation and information source trusted and relied upon by both consumers and the automotive industry, have published their 2014 Midsize Sedan Comparison Test, detailing findings from an extensive evaluation that included a two-day road trip that comprehensively tested eight vehicles in the popular segment... *MORE*

Car Shoppers Rate Safety Features High Among "Must Have" Technologies for Next Purchase, Reports Kelley Blue Book

USB/Auxiliary Ports, Satellite Radio Also Important to KBB.com Visitors

IRVINE, Calif., June 24, 2014 -- New-vehicle shoppers rank safety and information features like back-up/blind spot cameras, recall advisor, stolen vehicle recovery and collision sensors high among "must have" technologies for their next purchase, reports Kelley Blue Book www.kbb.com, the only vehicle valuation and information source trusted and relied upon by both consumers and the automotive industry. While 43 percent of consumers rate USB/auxiliary ports as the No. 1 "must have" feature, safety-related technologies were predominantly found among the top 10... *MORE*

Dale Earnhardt Jr. and Primary Sponsor Kelley Blue Book Place Third at Sonoma

Earnhardt Finishes Top 10 at Sonoma Track for the First Time with No. 88 Kelley Blue Book Chevrolet SS

IRVINE, Calif., June 23, 2014 -- Dale Earnhardt Jr. finished third Sunday in the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series event at Sonoma Raceway with his No. 88 Kelley Blue Book Chevrolet SS, which was the first time he has placed within the top 10 at the track in his professional career. It was the first race with Earnhardt and his Hendrick Motorsports team for primary sponsor Kelley Blue Book www.kbb.com, the only vehicle valuation and information source trusted and relied upon by both consumers and the automotive industry... *MORE*

About Kelley Blue Book (*www.kbb.com*)

Founded in 1926, Kelley Blue Book, The Trusted Resource®, is the only vehicle valuation and information source trusted and relied upon by both consumers and the automotive industry. Each week the company provides the most market-reflective values in the industry on its top-rated website KBB.com, including its famous Blue Book® Trade-In and Suggested Retail Values, and Fair Purchase Price, which reports what others are paying for new cars this week. The company also provides vehicle pricing and values through various products and services available to car dealers, auto manufacturers, finance and insurance companies, and governmental agencies. Kelley Blue Book's KBB.com ranked highest in its category for brand equity by the 2014 Harris Poll EquiTrend® study and has been named Online Auto Shopping Brand of the Year for three consecutive years. Kelley Blue Book Co., Inc. is a Cox Automotive company.