

BLUE BOOK

BRIEFING

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The latest video and written news stories by the editorial staff of Kelley Blue Book's KBB.com

NEW-VEHICLE REVIEWS ON KBB.COM:

All-new and updated video and written reviews from the editorial staff of Kelley Blue Book's KBB.com, and links to consumer reviews and ratings on KBB.com

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The World As We Have Known It

- Jack R. Nerad, vice president, executive editorial director and executive market analyst, Kelley Blue Book's KBB.com

We are now more than five years past the Lehman shock that plunged us into the Great Recession. It seems like we have been waiting a long, long time for the economy to kick itself back in high gear, and if you ask the person in the street, it just hasn't happened. Not only does official, federal-government-recognized unemployment remain high, but unofficial unemployment in the form of people who have given up even looking for work might double that figure. If you are a small retailer, run a restaurant or have your own auto repair shop, you will attest to the fact that times are still tough and that, generally speaking, folks are not spending money the way they used to in those good, old days of the 1990s and early 2000s.

Oddly, though, in the post-shock era two subsets of the economy have enjoyed several years of uninterrupted gains – the stock market and the auto industry. The simple word-on-the-street explanation for the stock market's continued uptrend is the smart-alec retort, "What else are you going to do with your money?" Since traditional bank savings accounts pay nearly nothing these days, the stock market presents one of the few places where one can hope to get some return. While a number of investors are buying "distressed" single-family homes and apartments; that is out of reach of most people, so the market is the recipient of a

steady influx of cash as Americans try to put some money away for retirement. Thus far it beats stuffing money into your mattress.

The continued rise of the auto industry in the face of an otherwise tepid recovery and crushing unemployment is a bigger mystery, but there are several explanations, and they are related to the success of the stock market. First, interest rates are low, which fuels affordability, and some vehicles have been on the road so long they are simply wearing out and must be replaced. And there also is a bit of the "What else are you going to do with your money?" frame of mind that fuels equities. With interest rates low, consumers aren't going to earn much if they save, while those same low interest rates will help them buy (or lease) a car or truck. The question of "Why?" becomes "Why not?"

But there is a larger question to be grappled with in light of this extended but lackluster recovery – Has the world as we've known it fundamentally changed?

In the past, recessions were followed by recoveries, and over the course of the post-World War II era the deeper the recession, the steeper the recovery. The economy (and the auto market) took its jolts, but it came back quickly and robustly. But evidence exists that a change has taken place.

In the wake of the Great Recession, the auto market has (comparatively) come roaring back, while the overall economy and especially employment have lagged badly. Instead of moving in concert, recovery in autos has not been accompanied by recovery in employment. Further, the stock market seems to be behaving in a manner largely divorced from the Main Street experience that is still pockmarked with empty storefronts, foreclosed homes and potential workers who have found their job search so futile they are not even looking for work anymore.

You can make the case that any economy is in a danger zone when it responds more to government stimulus than to market forces, and if you make that case, you might well be concerned about where we are right now. This isn't the world as we've known it.

“IN THE WAKE OF THE GREAT RECESSION, THE AUTO MARKET HAS (COMPARATIVELY) COME ROARING BACK, WHILE THE OVERALL ECONOMY AND ESPECIALLY EMPLOYMENT HAVE LAGGED BADLY...”

- JACK R. NERAD

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 during January 2014.

Videos Posted to KBB.com:

[12 Best Family Cars of 2014](#)

[2014 Kia Soul Review](#)

[2014 Mitsubishi Mirage Review](#)

[2015 Kia Soul EV - 2014 Chicago Auto Show](#)

[2015 Lincoln Navigator - 2014 Chicago Auto Show](#)

[2015 Nissan Versa Note SR - 2014 Chicago Auto Show](#)

[2015 Subaru Legacy](#)

[2015 Toyota Tundra, Tacoma and 4Runner TRD PRO - 2014 Chicago Auto Show](#)

[The Cars of the 2014 Chicago Auto Show](#)

Written Stories Posted to KBB.com:

Highlights:

[10 Best AWD Cars & SUVs Under \\$25,000](#)

[10 Best Hybrid Cars Under \\$30,000](#)

[10 Most Affordable Cars of 2014](#)

[2014 Chicago Auto Show: The New Cars](#)

[Big Game, Cars and Pizza: The Infographic](#)

[Government starts rulemaking to enable car-to-car communication](#)

[Kelley Blue Book Announces 2014 5-Year Cost to Own Winners](#)

Family Car Comparisson:

[12 Best Family Cars of 2014](#)

[12 Best Family Cars: 2014 Chevrolet Impala](#)

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[12 Best Family Cars: 2014 Ford Flex](#)

[12 Best Family Cars: 2014 Honda Accord](#)

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[Best Family Cars 2014: The Runners-Up](#)

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[Editors' Page: 2014 GMC Acadia](#)

[Editors' Page: 2014 GMC Sierra](#)

[Editors' Page: 2014 Honda Pilot](#)

[Editors' Page: 2014 Hyundai Santa Fe](#)

[Editors' Page: 2014 Mazda CX-9](#)

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[Editors' Page: 2014 Ram 1500](#)

[Editors' Page: 2014 Toyota Highlander](#)

[Editors' Page: 2014 Toyota Tundra](#)

LATEST NEWS STORIES ON KBB.COM CONTINUED:

Vehicle Coverage:

[2014 Audi S8 Quick Take](#)

[2014 BMW 428i M Sport Quick Take](#)

[2014 BMW 740Ld xDrive debuts in Chicago](#)

[2014 BMW X5 M Performance Parts unveiled](#)

[2014 Cadillac ELR Coupe offers first 1000 purchasers a free home charger](#)

[2014 Chevy Spark sole minicar to earn an IIHS Top Safety Pick rating](#)

[2014 Chrysler 300C John Varvatos Limited Edition adds AWD option](#)

[2014 Dodge Journey Crossroad debuts in Chicago](#)

[2014 Ford F-150 Tonka Edition hits the road](#)

[2014 Honda Crosstour EX-L Quick Take](#)

[2014 Hyundai Genesis Coupe boasts enhanced feature set](#)

[2014 Hyundai Veloster RE:FLEX Edition revealed](#)

[2014 Infiniti Q50S Quick Take](#)

[2014 Jeep Cherokee Altitude unveiled](#)

[2014 Kia Forte5 SX Quick Take](#)

[2014 Kia Optima Hybrid adds sharper style and more features](#)

[2014 Lexus GS450h Quick Take](#)

[2014 Mazda MX-5 Miata Quick Take](#)

[2014 Mini Cooper and Cooper S Hardtop prices announced](#)

[2014 Mini Cooper and Cooper S Hardtops First Drive: Still Playful, Strongly German](#)

[2014 Mitsubishi Mirage G4 Sedan shows its face in Montreal](#)

[2014 Nissan 370Z Roadster Quick Take](#)

[2014 Ram 1500 EcoDiesel nets best-ever EPA full-size pickup marks](#)

[2014 SRT Satin Vapor Editions unveiled](#)

[2014 Toyota Highlander Limited Quick Take](#)

[2014.5 Toyota Camry Hybrid SE Limited Edition coming soon](#)

[2015 Aston Martin V12 Vantage S First Drive: British Hot Rod with a Hot Bod](#)

[2015 BMW 4 Series Gran Coupe unveiled before Geneva debut](#)

[2015 BMW X3 - more style, rear-drive and a new turbodiesel option](#)

[2015 Cadillac Escalade pricing will start at \\$72,690](#)

[2015 Chevrolet City Express rolls into Chicago](#)

[2015 Chevrolet Silverado 2500/3500 HD CNG pickups unveiled](#)

[2015 Chevrolet Silverado/GMC Sierra HD First Drive: GM's resident heavy-weights are in fighting form](#)

[2015 Ferrari California T gets a new look - and twin-turbo V8 power](#)

[2015 Kia K900 First Drive: Taking a Giant Leap](#)

[2015 Kia Soul EV makes Windy City debut](#)

[2015 Mercedes-Benz S-Class Coupe revealed](#)

[2015 Nissan Versa Note SR unveiled](#)

[2015 Subaru Legacy teased for Chicago debut](#)

[2015 Subaru Legacy unveiled in Chicago](#)

[2015 Subaru models will introduce next-gen EyeSight system](#)

[2015 Toyota Tundra, Tacoma, 4Runner TRD Pro bow in Chicago](#)

[2015 Volkswagen Golf R First Drive: Fast and Frozen - Gen 7](#)

[2015 Volvo S60/V60 Polestar bow in Chicago](#)

[Editors' Page: 2014 Chevrolet Malibu](#)

[First Porsche-designed car goes on display at the factory museum](#)

[Ford partners with MIT and Stanford on autonomous car program](#)

[Honda Civic Type R Concept teased for Geneva](#)

[Kia Niro Concept makes U.S. debut](#)

[Koenigsegg Agera One:1 teased for Geneva](#)

[Lincoln Unveils 2015 Navigator, Drops V8 for EcoBoost V6](#)

[Maserati Ghibli ad nets top new-car search response on KBB.com](#)

[McLaren 650S teased for Geneva debut](#)

[Mustang 50th Birthday Celebration plans announced](#)

[Nissan Frontier Diesel Runner powered by Cummins revealed](#)

[Nissan's new 400-hp/3-cylinder race engine could see street duty](#)

[Say hello to the new Fiat Chrysler Automobiles](#)

[Sinkhole devours eight cars at the National Corvette Museum](#)

[Toyota halts sales on Camry, Corolla, Tundra, 5 other models to fix seat heaters](#)

[Toyota issues voluntary recall of most 2010-2014 Prius models in U.S.](#)

[Toyota takes 2013 global auto sales crown with 9.98 million units](#)

[Video Review: 2014 Kia Soul](#)

[Video Review: 2014 Mitsubishi Mirage](#)

[Volkswagen Beetle celebrates 65 years in the U.S.](#)

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 during January 2014. To see any new-vehicle review from KBB.com's editorial staff, please visit KBB.com and click on the *Car Reviews* tab, then select the make and model.

[2014 BMW i3](#)

Sporty driving manners, a premium interior amenities and BMW badge appeal.

[2014 Cadillac ELR](#)

The efficiency of a plug-in hybrid with the sleek silhouette of an upmarket sports coupe.

[2014 Chevrolet Express Van](#)

A time-tested van that can handle almost any task in any weather.

[2014 Ford Heavy Duty Trucks](#)

A powerful truck that is also capable, comfortable and even downright luxurious.

[2014 Honda Fit EV](#)

The electrified Fit abounds with versatility and value.

[2014 Honda Insight](#)

High fuel economy and low ownership cost is the name of the game for the Honda Insight.

[2014 Hyundai Azera](#)

The 2014 Hyundai Azera blends a seductive outer skin with a lush interior filled with premium amenities usually reserved for cars costing tens of thousands more.

[2014 Hyundai Elantra](#)

An extensive standard features list and interior volume on par with some midsize sedans make the Elantra a great bargain.

[2014 Jaguar XF](#)

Whether you're a trendsetter, trailblazer or simply an admirer of Britannic automotive design, the XF is a unique alternative to common midsize luxury sedans.

[2014 Kia Sportage](#)

Today's Sportage is a more civilized creature, touting a sophisticated yet firm suspension and a long list of features providing maximum comfort and convenience.

[2014 Lexus CT 200h](#)

A luxury car with a big dose of style and efficiency but a very small carbon footprint.

[2014 Maserati Ghibli](#)

The Ghibli is the clear sporting leader in this segment given its suspension settings and power delivery.

[2014 Mazda Mazda2](#)

A reliable, fuel-efficient small car that is as much fun to drive as it is to look at.

[2014 Mini Cooper Roadster](#)

The 2014 Mini Cooper Roadster proves mini can be mighty, especially if you love the classic British roadsters of the past.

[2014 Mitsubishi i-MiEV](#)

Its biggest plus is the low price.

[2014 Smart Fortwo](#)

One of the most affordable cars you can buy, sips fuel and can be parked in spaces overlooked by most cars.

[2014 Subaru XV Crosstrek](#)

[2014 Toyota Prius C](#)

If you thought a hybrid was out of your price range, the 2014 Toyota Prius C will surprise you with its affordability and wealth of standard features.

[2015 Mazda CX-5](#)

Solid value, fun to drive, and advanced safety features.

KBB.com: 10 Best New-Car Deals for February Including President's Day Weekend

Kelley Blue Book Names This Month's Top Lease, Cash Back Deals; 2014 Nissan Altima Incentive Ranked No. 1 for Second Consecutive Month

IRVINE, Calif., Feb. 14, 2014 -- Shoppers will be pleasantly surprised to learn a great place to start the search for their next new car is by looking through current sales. Helping shoppers to make the most informed car purchasing decisions, the expert editors at Kelley Blue Book www.kbb.com, the leading provider of new and used car information, have highlighted the 10 best February lease and cash back deals from a variety of auto manufacturers... [MORE](#)

Kelley Blue Book Names 12 Best Family Cars of 2014

KBB.com Expert Editors Partner with Families to Put Family Cars to the Real-life Test

IRVINE, Calif., Feb. 14, 2014 -- Not all options are as obvious as a minivan when it comes to cars best suited for families. In the same light, not all families have the same needs when it comes to their ideal car. Helping ease the struggle to find the best new cars tailored for families of all sizes, the editors of Kelley Blue Book www.kbb.com, the leading provider of new and used car information, have named their recommended list of the 12 Best Family Cars of 2014... [MORE](#)

Kelley Blue Book to Sponsor Dale Earnhardt Jr.

Two-Year Pact With Hendrick Motorsports Includes Primary NASCAR Races

IRVINE, Calif., and CONCORD, N.C., Feb. 13, 2014 – Kelley Blue Book, the vehicle valuation and information source trusted and relied upon by both consumers and the automotive industry, has joined Hendrick Motorsports as a primary sponsor of the No. 88 Chevrolet SS NASCAR Sprint Cup Series team with driver Dale Earnhardt Jr. in 2014 and 2015.

The two-year agreement includes full-season associate sponsorship, which provides Kelley Blue Book prominent brand placement on the No. 88 race cars throughout the Sprint Cup schedule, and primary sponsorship of Earnhardt in one event annually. The 2014 season will be the first as a NASCAR team sponsor for Kelley Blue Book, a subsidiary of AutoTrader Group... [MORE](#)

Kelley Blue Book Earns Cox Conserves Chairman's Cup, Donates Funds to Nature Reserve of Orange County

Irvine-Based Company Selected for Its Commitment to the Environment

IRVINE, Calif., Feb. 7, 2014 -- By developing a companywide recycling committee, making numerous sustainable building enhancements and encouraging an environmentally responsible lifestyle at work, Kelley Blue Book, www.kbb.com, the leading provider of new and used car information, was selected as a recipient of the Cox Conserves Chairman's Cup, an internal program that recognizes Cox Enterprises' field locations for implementing sustainable business practices. One location is selected from each of Cox's major subsidiaries (Cox Communications, Manheim, Cox Media Group and AutoTrader Group) as a winner... [MORE](#)

KBB.com Announces 2014 5-Year Cost to Own Award Winners

Mazda, Lexus Earn Second Consecutive Brand and Luxury Brand Wins for Lowest Projected 5-Year Ownership Costs

IRVINE, Calif., Feb. 5, 2014 -- The 2014 model-year vehicles and brands (in both non-luxury and luxury categories) with the lowest projected ownership costs were announced today by Kelley Blue Book www.kbb.com, the leading provider of new and used car information. These awards are based on Kelley Blue Book's 5-Year Cost to Own data for new cars for the initial five-year ownership period... [MORE](#)

New-Car Transaction Prices Down More Than One Percent in January 2014, According to Kelley Blue Book

Hyundai-Kia Show Greatest Transaction Price Gains, Volkswagen Drops More Than 5 Percent

IRVINE, Calif., Feb. 3, 2014 -- Wrapping up the first month of the new year, experts from Kelley Blue Book www.kbb.com, the leading provider of new and used car information report the estimated average transaction price for light vehicles in the United States was \$32,391 in January 2014. New-car prices decreased \$464 (down 1.4 percent) from December 2013, while increasing \$479 (1.5 percent) year-over-year. ... [MORE](#)

Maserati Ghibli's Super Bowl® XLVIII Commercial Garner's Highest Consumer Interest, According to Kelley Blue Book

Jaguar F-Type, Hyundai Genesis and Audi A3 Also Saw a Strong Surge in Search Activity on KBB.com

IRVINE, Calif., Feb. 3, 2014 -- Maserati Ghibli increased 4,250 percent in new-car searches on KBB.com, the most of any advertised model during Super Bowl XLVIII, according to Kelley Blue Book www.kbb.com, the leading provider of new and used car information. Other luxury models Jaguar F-Type, Hyundai Genesis and Audi A3 increased 1,733 percent, 838 percent and 813 percent in search activity on the site after the ads aired, respectively... [MORE](#)

10 Best Luxury Cars Under \$40,000 of 2014 Named by KBB.com; Cadillac ATS Ranked No. 1

Top Luxury Cars That Won't Break the Bank Determined By Kelley Blue Book Expert Editors

IRVINE, Calif., Jan. 29, 2014 -- Luxury transportation is now more attainable than the days of "Daddy Warbucks." In the midst of the holiday season, new-car shoppers can step up into a luxury car without breaking the bank by checking the expert recommended list of 10 Best Luxury Cars Under \$40,000 from Kelley Blue Book www.kbb.com, the leading provider of new and used car information... [MORE](#)

Majority Of KBB.com Visitors Believe Denver Broncos Will Win Super Bowl® XLVIII, According to Kelley Blue Book

KBB.com Reveals Big Game Predictions for Automaker Ad Influence; 76 Percent of Pro Football Fans Don't Recall Commercials from Last Year

IRVINE, Calif., Jan. 28, 2014 -- Based on KBB.com Big Game Insights, the majority (71 percent) of site visitors believe the Denver Broncos® will win Super Bowl XLVIII, according to Kelley Blue Book www.kbb.com, the leading provider of new and used car information. Research from Kelley Blue Book Market Intelligence, based on KBB.com survey data of U.S. adults, also reveals that only 29 percent of KBB.com visitors think the Seattle Seahawks® will be crowned Big Game champions.1 In addition, Kelley Blue Book reports its annual predictions for which automaker ads will best resonate among KBB.com car shoppers... [MORE](#)

2014 North American International Auto Show Introductions from Acura, Lexus, Subaru and Michelin are Driven by Performance

KBB.com's Micah Muzio reveals track ready Lexus, athlete inspired Acura, performance flagship from Subaru and the newest Michelin tire

DETROIT, Jan. 27, 2014 -- LEXUS RC F: Giving new meaning to "back to the grind," the daily commute is now transformed into a day at the track with the all-new Lexus RC F. The RC F coupe is styled to support the most powerful V8 performance car ever developed by Lexus.

Based on the spectacular all-new RC coupe that was revealed at the Tokyo Motor Show last November, the RC F has wider wheels and tires, an active rear wing, air scoops, cooling ducts and available carbon fiber components, each delivering uncompromising grit to the driving experience... [MORE](#)

New-Car Sales to Improve Nearly 2 Percent from Last Year; Kelley Blue Book Projects Best January Since 2007

Chrysler, Nissan Anticipate Solid Sales Numbers; Full-Size Pickup Truck Growth Expected to Slow in 2014

IRVINE, Calif., Jan. 23, 2014 -- New-vehicle sales are expected to improve 1.6 percent year-over-year in January to a total of 1.06 million units, and an estimated 15.9 million seasonally adjusted annual rate (SAAR), according to Kelley Blue Book www.kbb.com, the leading provider of new and used car information. At 15.9 million, this would be the highest recorded January SAAR since 2007, when it was 16.4 million

"January is typically the weakest sales month of the year as many consumers take advantage of holiday deals in December. However, winter storms also could impact new-vehicle sales this month, as much of the country deals with historically cold weather and snowstorms," said Alec Gutierrez, senior analyst for Kelley Blue Book. "Early estimates indicate fleet sales will be down as well."... [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 Co., Inc. is a subsidiary of AutoTrader Group, which includes AutoTrader.com, vAuto, VinSolutions and HomeNet Automotive. AutoTrader Group is a majority-owned subsidiary of Cox Enterprises.