Kbb.com's 2010 Top 10 Back-to-School Cars: Editors Rank Fun, Affordable New, Used Rides

Kbb.com Editors Recommend Back-to-School Vehicle Choices to Please Students, Parents; Offer Car-Buying Advice

IRVINE, Calif., Aug. 5 /PRNewswire/ -- The 2010 Top 10 Back-to-School Cars today were named by the expert editors from Kelley Blue Bookwww.kbb.com, the leading provider of new car and used car information. With students heading back to high school and college campuses nationwide, the expert kbb.com editors offer their top recommendations for getting to and from class in a fun, economical, versatile and reliable vehicle. The editors also provide car shopping and buying tips to aid both students and parents in this all-important purchase decision.

Along with choosing the right books, calculator and backpack for the upcoming academic year, the return to school often calls for selecting a new (or used) ride. Choosing the right kind of car can be a difficult process, especially when parents and their children are at odds with what they need versus what they want in a set of wheels. While features such as reliability, safety, affordability and practicality are important to any parent, how quickly their car accelerates, how tech-savvy it is and how cool it looks when cruising to the school football game are often bigger concerns for students.

The good news is that there are plenty of vehicles out there that can please both parties. Those considering a new entry-level vehicle will find the latest and greatest safety and technology advancements, a full warranty and, of course, that new-car smell. If saving money places higher on the "must" list, then there are plenty of dependable used cars out there that would suit the needs of any young adult.

In choosing the 2010 Top 10 Back-to-School Cars, the kbb.com editors kept key financial criteria in mind, considering all new cars with a New Car Blue Book Value under $18,000 (New Car Blue Book Values are based on real-world transaction prices, reflecting the price consumers actually are paying for the car at dealerships). For the used cars on the list, the editors narrowed it down to 2005 model-year and newer vehicles, with a Kelley Blue Book Suggested Retail Value of less than $12,000.

"This year's all-new car entries, like theChevrolet Cruze and Ford Fiesta, offer advanced technological features and forward-looking designs to engage any student with price points that won't disappoint parents," said Jack R. Nerad, executive editorial director and executive market analyst for Kelley Blue Book's kbb.com. "There also are mainstays like the Mazda3 and Honda Civic which seem to make our Back-to-School list year after year. With so many well-equipped new cars and bargain-priced used cars on the market, we'd argue that this may be the best year yet to find a ride that will please both parents and students."

This year, the kbb.com editors mixed new and used together, and ranked them in order from 10 to one. Click through the 2010 Top 10 Back-to-School Cars gallery on kbb.com to see which cars made the list, and which one they crowned the best of the best back-to-school rides.

Samples from Kbb.com's 2010 Top 10 Back-to-School Cars List

#10: 2011 Chevrolet Cruze

#9: 2008 Suzuki SX4 Hatchback

#8: 2006 Ford Crown Victoria

#7: 2010 Kia Soul

#6: 2005 Saab 9-2X

For numbers five through one on the 2010 Top 10 Back-to-School Cars list, including full editorial commentary and reasoning behind each of the editors' vehicle picks, visit the Top 10 Back-to-School Cars story in kbb.com's Latest News section at http://kbb.us/back2school2010.

CAR SHOPPING AND BUYING TIPS FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS:

Arguably some of the vehicles on the list may be cooler than others (but cool is, after all, in the eye of the beholder), and some are more practical, but each offers a balance of attributes that qualifies it as a great option for a back-to-school ride. To help ensure driving and ownership satisfaction into the coming school year and beyond, follow these guidelines for getting the right car at the right price:

- **Do Your Research -** All the information you need to put together a short list of favorite vehicles is available at kbb.com, including expert reviews, real-world values, side-by-side comparisons, safety and reliability ratings and more. There are even tools like an enhanced Perfect Car Finder®: Photo Edition that can help you decide exactly what ride is best for you.
- **Consider Your Green Options -** Visit the comprehensive KBB® Green section at www.kbb.com/green to learn about fuel-efficient vehicle options and various environmentally friendly technologies, participate in Green blogs and forums, take the Fuel-Efficiency Challenge and more.
- **Consider Buying Certified Pre-Owned (CPO) –** When you buy a CPO vehicle, you get the value of buying a used car with the peace of mind that comes from getting new-car-like features, such as a manufacturer-backed vehicle warranty, full vehicle inspection and more. Learn more about buying CPO, compare all manufacturer CPO programs and even search for CPO vehicle inventory in your local area on kbb.com here: www.kbb.com/cpo
- **Drive Two or Three Different Models -** It's easy to enjoy a test drive in the vehicle at the top of your list, but without driving one or two others to compare, you might easily miss out on something you'd like even more.
- **Buying Used? -** Whether buying from a private party or a dealer, it's always a good idea to have any used vehicle checked out by a reputable independent service shop. When purchasing from an individual, print the private-party value from kbb.com as well as Kelley Blue Book's 27-point Vehicle Condition Quiz to take with you. These items will help you determine the "actual" condition and value of the vehicle.
- **Buying New? -** Always use a vehicle's New Car Blue Book Value, not Manufacturer's Suggested Retail Price, as your basis for comparing vehicles and negotiating with the dealer. New Car Blue Book Value reflects real-world selling prices, which are often hundreds or even thousands of dollars less than MSRP.
- **Parents:** Don't buy a car for your teen without driving it yourself, as your experience can help you identify problems or shortcomings that your teen may not notice. Also, trust your own judgment and don't let your teen talk you into buying a vehicle with which you're not fully comfortable.
- **Teens:** Do all of your homework before you meet with mom or dad; show them you are responsible and ready for a car, and make it easy for them to say "yes" to your well-researched choice.

About Kelley Blue Book (www.kbb.com)

Since 1926, Kelley Blue Book, The Trusted Resource®, has provided vehicle buyers and sellers with the new- and used-vehicle information they need to accomplish their goals with confidence. The company's top-rated website, www.kbb.com, provides the most up-to-date pricing and values, including the New Car Blue Book® Value, which reveals what people actually are paying for new cars. The company also reports vehicle pricing and values via products and

services, including software products and the famous Blue Book® Official Guide. According to the C.A. Walker Research Solutions, Inc. - 2009 Spring Automotive Website Usefulness Study, kbb.com is the most useful automotive information website among new- and used-vehicle shoppers, and half of online vehicle shoppers visit kbb.com. Kelley Blue Book's kbb.com also is a W3 Gold Award winner, sanctioned by the International Academy of Visual Arts. Kbb.com is a leading provider of new car prices, used car values, car reviews, new cars for sale, used cars for sale, and car dealer locations.

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