

## Car shoppers show interest in SUVs in 2007

by Bend\_Weekly\_News\_Sources

Despite a slowdown in SUV sales over the past several years as a result of higher gas prices, 21 percent of consumers who plan to buy a car in 2007 intend to purchase an SUV or crossover vehicle, according to a recent Cars.com survey.\*

Roughly 24 percent of survey respondents said they will buy a new or used car this year, and no body style was more popular than SUVs and crossovers. Next were small sedans, at more than 19 percent; large sedans, 11 percent; compact cars, 8 percent; pickup trucks, 7 percent; and hybrid cars, 6 percent. A large portion of consumers -- 28 percent -- remain undecided as to what type of car they will buy.

"Manufacturers are doing a good job of making SUVs and crossover vehicles more fuel-efficient, which will be more attractive to consumers," said Patrick Olsen, managing editor of Cars.com. "However, high gas prices will still be a deciding factor for many undecided shoppers, especially if prices climb again as they typically do in the summer months."

Fuel-efficiency was the second most important factor for shoppers when it came to choosing a car, behind price. Fuel-efficiency was followed by safety, size and body style in order of importance to consumers.

\* The survey was conducted online for Cars.com by Impulse Research Inc., with a random sample of 1,011 men and women representing a cross-section of the U.S. population. The overall sampling error for this survey is plus or minus 3% at a 95% level of confidence.

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