

May set to be best month for US auto sales in 6 years

SAN JOSE, Calif. (KGO) – Big sales this holiday weekend is set to make May the best month for U.S. automakers in 11 years and it could push U.S. vehicle sales for 2013 to more than \$15 million — the highest in six years. ABC7 News caught up with tire kickers in San Jose to see what's driving them to car lots in big numbers. There were car shoppers at the lot even before all of the sales team arrived this morning. Memorial Day weekend deals are unleashing pent-up demand. "We're seeing a lot more confidence. A lot of people out there really feeling a lot better about what's going on in the market, and that helps car sales that's for sure," said Paul Normandin from Normandin Chrysler Dodge Jeep Ram. At Normandin Chrysler Dodge Jeep Ram, new vehicle sales in May are running 20 percent higher than May of last year with the Dodge Wrangler and Jeep Grand Cherokee leading the pack. Dealers up and down San Jose's Capitol Expressway Auto Mall are enticing buyers with rebates and very low interest rates. "Anywhere from \$1,000 to \$5,000 in rebates, 0 percent on a few different cars, 1.9, 2.9 percent financing," said Ryder Queenan from Capitol Chevrolet. With rates that low, dealers say customers are putting down as little as possible in cash. "If you're paying just a few percent, a couple of percent financing, it's almost free money. It's not free money, but it's something to take advantage of," said Victor Adint, a San Jose SUV shopper. It's really pick-up trucks that are fueling new vehicle sales across the country, but here in Silicon Valley, SUV's and automobiles are a lot more popular. A rebound in construction activity and home building is behind the pickup in truck buying, which could hit a 22 percent increase this month, versus 9 percent across all vehicles. Sales managers see a willingness among consumers to spend. "Absolutely, it seems that they do. I mean, you can see we have a packed showroom now. We have 10 people waiting to go into finance that just bought cars, so it's been wonderful," said Queenan. Megan Gonzales has her eyes on a Chevy Impala, but it doesn't qualify for a holiday weekend deal. "They say it's a 2014 brand new. Even though with Memorial Day weekend sales and all the deals other dealerships have, I guess they don't have it for this car at all," said Fred Gonzales, Megan's dad. But Megan is continuing to negotiate. abclocal.go.com