

# SUV sales swift despite rising gas prices

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## EXTRACT

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## ARTICLE CONTENT

Traditionally, the winter isn't known for being a time of year that brings a heightened amount of traffic on Canada's roads, especially when compared to the busy summer travel season. That hasn't been enough to keep prices at the pump from rising, however, as newly released numbers indicate that the cost of gasoline continues to edge higher.

According to its report on industrial products and raw materials, Statistics Canada notes that gas prices countrywide increased more than 8 percent in February, which is the largest monthly increase to be recorded since May 2008.

In fact, in all 10 provinces, gasoline prices have increased, with some of the most significant price hikes emanating from Alberta and British Columbia.

People in the country's most largest cities are also witnessing prices soar, as TorontoGasPrices.com says that fuel expenses are steadily moving northward in the metro area.

### **Many of today's SUVs get more than 30 mpg on highway**

Despite consumers spending more at their local fueling stations, that hasn't translated into slow vehicle sales, especially among vehicles that are reputed to be gas guzzlers.

In a recent article, the Toronto Star's Wheels.ca columnist Eric Lai noted that anyone who takes to the country's streets can see for themselves that sport utility vehicles are quite popular. Sales reports from SUV producers like Ford - which produces SUVs like the Fusion and Lincoln Navigator - substantiate this, as the company has posted strong monthly earnings since the beginning of the year.

"There's no escaping the fact that North Americans love their large vehicles," said Lai.

The SUV's reputation as being a vehicle that's inefficient appears to be slowly but surely shedding this stereotype. Late last year, vehicle valuation firm Kelley Blue Book released its list of what it considers to be the automotive industry's most fuel-efficient SUV and crossovers.

A leading contender in this vehicle segment, according to KBB, is the 2012 Nissan Juke. The vehicle valuation company says even though the Juke is known for having a powerful motor, sporting a 188-horsepower engine, it still gets 27 miles per gallon in the city and 32 mpg on the highway.

Another leading vote getter in fuel efficiency is the 2013 Mazda CX-5. KBB says that the sporty SUV makes for a great driving experience, especially when one considers that it earns 26 mpg in urban location and 35 mpg on the highway.

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The best of them all, however, is the 2012 Ford Escape Hybrid. The vehicle pricing firm points out that this is the last model year in which the Escape will be produced, but it's going out in style, thanks to its 32 mpg combined fuel-efficiency ratio.

**More than half of Canadians say they always price check before fueling up**

In addition to collecting quote estimates with local car insurance providers, Canadian motorists are also doing their own reconnaissance work and checking out what gas prices are in their general vicinity.

In a non-scientific online poll posted at the automotive website Wheels.ca, readers were asked if they look for the cheapest gas before fueling up their vehicles. Nearly half - 49 percent - indicated that they always did, while 22 percent said they never did this. Approximately 28 percent said they shopped around for gas prices every once in awhile.

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