Fountain Forward Forecasts 16.6 Million SAAR for July 2026 U.S. Auto Sales

Strong consumer demand, SUV and light-truck sales, and renewed EV interest support a positive summer automotive industry outlook

HOUSTON, TX, UNITED STATES, August 1, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Fountain Forward projects that the upcoming economic release for U.S. light vehicle sales will report a 16.6 million seasonally adjusted annual rate (SAAR) for July 2026.

The automotive market forecast reflects consumers' willingness to take on record levels of automotive debt, supported by strong demand for SUVs and light trucks. Additionally, electric vehicle sales are seeing a noteworthy bounce this summer.

At the other end of the market, used vehicle demand is expected to remain an important contributor to dealership performance as consumers continue seeking value-oriented alternatives amid higher vehicle prices and financing costs.

Automotive Industry Outlook

Fountain Forward's automotive industry outlook for July 2026 indicates that a strong summer is evolving as the U.S. consumer marches on.

Consumer demand continues to be influenced by affordability, financing availability, insurance costs, and monthly payment sensitivity. Dealers should continue monitoring changes in manufacturer incentive programs, inventory availability, and consumer shopping behavior as market conditions evolve.

By analyzing historical sales performance, high-frequency economic indicators, dealer benchmarks, and proprietary behavioral signals, Fountain Forward delivers an automotive market forecast designed to help dealers anticipate near-term demand, optimize marketing investments, and align inventory strategy in a shifting economic environment.

Auto Industry Insights for Dealers

"The best advice over the past 40 years is ringing true once again this summer. 'Don't Bet Against the American Consumer!' This is 3+ years of markets insisting the consumer is exhausted: Sticky

Inflation. Student Loans. Rising Delinquencies. Higher Rates. All heard. All dominated by the backdrop of record household wealth, abundant liquidity, and healthy labor markets powering economic activity well above what most economists have predicted." said Stephen Jurgella, CEO of Fountain Forward at a recent gathering of industry executives.

Key Dealer Takeaways for July

Inventory Strategy
Continue maintaining a balanced inventory mix while prioritizing vehicles that align with current consumer demand and affordability. Monitor inventory aging and adjust merchandising strategies as manufacturer incentives evolve.

Marketing Strategy
Continue emphasizing payment-focused messaging, financing opportunities, manufacturer incentives, and trade-in value. Consumers remain highly price-conscious and continue comparing dealerships before making purchasing decisions.

F&I Focus
Prepare for continued pressure from financing qualification, longer loan terms, and negative equity. Clear payment scenarios and transparent financing communication remain valuable conversion tools.

Sales Execution
Expect shoppers to remain active while continuing to spend additional time researching and comparing options before purchasing. Fast response times, effective follow-up, and strong lead management remain critical.

The Automotive Accelerator

Fountain Forward's unique advantage is its Automotive Accelerator. Through the Automotive Accelerator, the company helps auto dealers generate more qualified leads, identify bottlenecks limiting sales, and deploy marketing investments where they are most likely to drive vehicle sales.

Rather than relying on isolated advertising metrics, Fountain Forward uses a full-funnel approach designed to help dealers sell more vehicles with greater consistency, stronger accountability, and clearer visibility into what is driving performance in today's automotive market.

Fountain Forward's forecasting framework integrates proprietary consumer behavioral indicators, sentiment measures, and leading economic variables to translate complex market data into clear, actionable insights for dealerships operating in competitive local markets.

Prior Forecast Performance

Fountain Forward’s June forecast projected a 16.138 million SAAR for June 2026, compared with an actual reported result of 16.523 million.

Fountain Forward runs its forecasting framework using proprietary street-level behavioral data, dealership performance indicators, and evolving macroeconomic conditions to improve directional accuracy and market responsiveness.

For those holding the company accountable to the precise number, Fountain Forward projects that the upcoming economic release for U.S. light vehicle sales will report a 16.584 million seasonally adjusted annual rate for July 2026.

About Fountain Forward

Fountain Forward is an automotive marketing and analytics agency specializing in vehicle sales forecasting, automotive market analysis, and dealership performance insights. By combining national automotive trends with dealership-level and high-frequency data, Fountain Forward delivers trusted automotive industry outlooks that help dealers plan for sustainable growth.

For deeper insight into current market trends and dealership implications, watch the Automotive Market Minute, Fountain Forward’s monthly video series breaking down the latest automotive sales trends and industry data.

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