

AAPEX 2026 Media Guide Highlights Eye-Popping Economic Statistics Ahead of November Show

Combined U.S. footprint to grow to \$599.7 billion in 2026; produce nearly 5 million jobs, as Americans drive 2.32 trillion miles in 294 million aging vehicles

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EINPresswire.com/ -- The global automotive aftermarket is expected to grow to \$2.65 trillion in 2026, which is \$35 billion gain compared to the same assessment last year. The U.S. aftermarket, including light- and heavy-duty vehicles, will grow to \$599.7 billion. That works out to about 1.9% of the current forecast for the U.S. gross domestic product (GDP).



These statistics are courtesy of a new media guide published today by the Automotive Aftermarket Products Expo ([AAPEX](#)) in advance of AAPEX 2026 being held this November in Las Vegas. The guide is freely available online, produced for media who plan to attend the show, yet will also be a useful at-a-glance reference for any automotive reporter.

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Liz Goad, VP, Events, MEMA Aftermarket Suppliers, which co-produces AAPEX

“The aftermarket is defined as the products and services that safely maintain or repair vehicles after the initial sale,” said MEMA Aftermarket Suppliers Vice President of Events Liz Goad. “It is an enormous market known for slow but reliably steady growth because there are 1.61 billion vehicles in operation around the world – and all of them require maintenance and repairs.”

Automotive aftermarket statistics

Some of the automotive aftermarket statistics included in the [2026 AAPEX Media Guide](#) follow below.

- Aftermarket size. The U.S. aftermarket, for light-duty vehicles, is forecasted to grow 5.2% in 2026 to \$457 billion. The aftermarket for heavy-duty vehicles is valued at another \$142.9 billion, for a combined total of \$599.7 billion.

- Vehicular miles traveled. U.S. residents operated 294 million light vehicles in 2025 and drove 3.32 trillion miles. That's a little more than one vehicle and 13,700 miles traveled per each of the 242.3 million U.S. licensed drivers. There are an additional 9.8 million heavy-duty vehicles in operation (VIO) that were driven for 329.6 billion miles.

- The average age of vehicles in operation. The average age of U.S. vehicles continues to grow as new car prices rise. The combined average age of light vehicles in the U.S. is 12.94 years – up from the 12.8 calculated last year. When considered separately, light trucks average 11.9 years of age and cars average 15.

- The aftermarket's contribution to employment. The automotive aftermarket provided 4,872,300 jobs in 2025 – across suppliers, manufacturers, retailers, independent repair facilities, and more. That's about 3.6% of the total U.S. labor force, which the BLS puts at 163 million people, ages 16 and older. Wages in many of these jobs grew in step, or even outpaced, the rate of U.S. inflation.

- Automotive repair capacity. Independent repair facilities accounted for 72% of the available repair capacity in the U.S. in 2025. Dealerships accounted for the other 28%. In terms of dollars, aggregate sales from independent repair facilities totaled \$312.7 billion in 2025, compared with \$121.4 billion at dealerships.

- Frothy M&A market. There were 354 aftermarket merger and acquisition (M&A) transactions in



2025, compared with 337 in 2024 and 306 in 2023. After AAPEX 2025, bankers, private equity executives and analysts who attended said they [expect the pace of dealmaking](#) to accelerate in 2026.

“These statistics demonstrate just how dependent the world is on the automotive aftermarket, which is especially true for the U.S. given the paucity of public transportation,” said Auto Care Association Vice President of Trade Shows and Community Engagement Mark Bogdansky. “Whether for work, play or business, almost everything in this country moves on a vehicle that relies on the aftermarket to keep it operating safely.”

Data sources

The data presented is derived from two benchmark reports published by AAPEX parent organizations, the Auto Care Association and MEMA Aftermarket: the 188-page 2026 Auto Care Factbook and the MEMA 2026 Aftermarket Size & Forecast Report.

Both associations invest considerably in market research and employ data scientists to produce these reports. These teams cull through government data and collaborate closely with credible third parties – academics, bankers and market research organizations – to produce these reports.

Register for AAPEX 2026

AAPEX 2026 is shaping up to be one of the most exciting shows in the aftermarket’s recent history. Organizers have unveiled a number of show enhancements and an improved exhibit floor layout. Former Olympic and NCAA basketball coach Mike Krzyzewski is headlining the AAPEX 2026 Keynote Breakfast, and several celebrities will make guest appearances.

Registration is open for automotive aftermarket professionals; register here. The fee to attend is \$75 until Sep. 25th and \$100 thereafter.

Members of the media are eligible for a complimentary pass to AAPEX. The keynote breakfast with Coach K is also a ticketed event, and a limited number of complimentary passes are available to the media upon request.

About AAPEX

AAPEX unites the global automotive aftermarket – a market valued at \$2.65 trillion worldwide and \$599.7 billion in the U.S. – that keeps the world’s 1.61 billion vehicles safely on the road. The annual tradeshow attracts thousands of exhibitors and tens of thousands of attendees from around the world to find new products and innovations, expand business relationships, and advance their team’s skills with world-class technical and business training sessions. Exhibitors span suppliers, manufacturers, remanufacturers, technology solution providers, and

more. Industry buyers that attend include automotive service and repair professionals, auto parts retailers, quick lube businesses, independent warehouse distributors, program groups, service chains, automotive dealers, fleet buyers and engine builders.

With more than 60 years of history, AAPEX is one of the longest-running and largest automotive aftermarket events in the Western Hemisphere. It consistently ranks in the top 1% of U.S. trade shows by leading trade publications, including the Gold 100 Honorees by Trade Show Executive (TSE) and the Top 250 Trade Show List by Trade Show Network News (TSNN).

AAPEX is a trade-only event and is closed to the general public.

AAPEX is co-produced by MEMA Aftermarket Suppliers and the Auto Care Association. For more information, visit aapexshow.com or email: info@aapexshow.com.

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