

## Auto industry slowly picking up

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There has been an increase in the number of people coming in to buy cars, said the BC president of the New Car Dealers Association.

**Blair Qualey** was in town last week as part of his annual tour around the province to find out what issues car dealers are facing.

"It's been a challenging year," he admitted, saying that both domestic and import sales were hurt this year. Dealers worked hard to keep staff and still keep up sponsor commitments in their communities, he said.

Gary MacCarthy of MacCarthy Motors has been in the business for more than 30 years and said things haven't been as slow as things since the recession in the 1980s.

But the pace is picking up again, and Qualey is hoping new car sales will go up. He noted that during last year's economic crisis, truck sales were high throughout the province, while new fuel-efficient car sales were down. He speculates that people who would have bought cars were impacted by the recession.

Used car sales were up this year, and Qualey said the BC Scrap It program has worked well to get older cars with bigger emissions off the road.

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