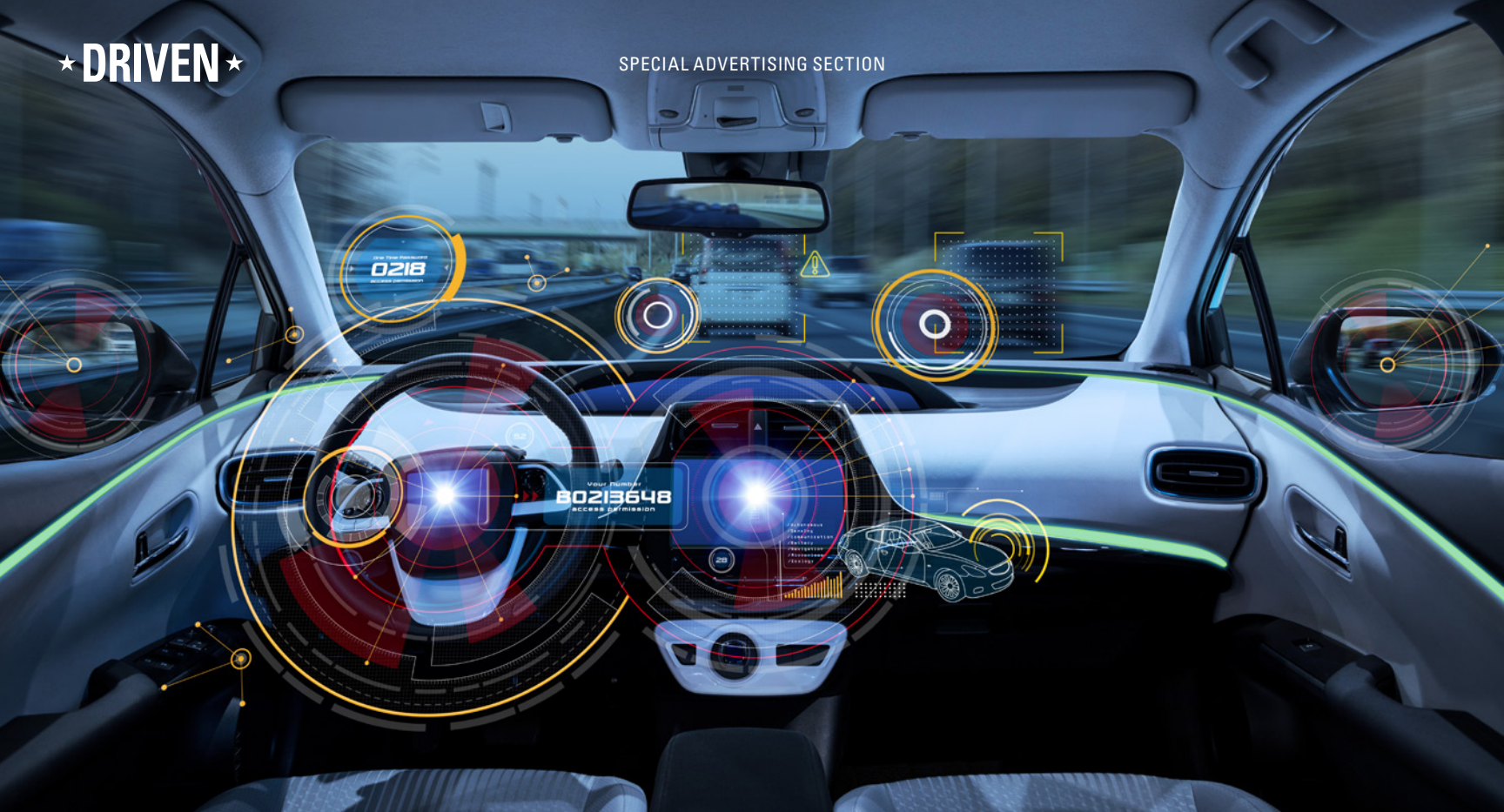


# DRIVEN





## THE AUTO INDUSTRY IS EVER-CHANGING.

Over the years, we've seen self-driving vehicles turn from fantasy into reality. We've also seen sedans — once among the most popular vehicle models in the United States — sharply decrease in popularity. As we enter a new era of vehicles, one that is dominated by technology, it's important for consumers to understand trends and how they can approach the market.

### DRIVER-ASSISTED VEHICLES ARE HERE NOW

Even just a decade or so ago, driver-assistance systems on cars were still a fringe idea. Some manufacturers implemented lane-departure warnings and rearview cameras, but they were far from the norm.

Today, every manufacturer has some type of car with self-driving or computer-assistance capabilities. Vehicles will essentially drive themselves on freeways, automatically parallel park or back up completely unassisted. And while that might seem impressive, the technology continues to improve, as manufacturers speed toward completely self-driving vehicles.

"The vehicles are here now," said Scott Politte,

president at Stivers Ford Lincoln in Waukee. "We have vehicles that will drive themselves, and they'll actually take over to prevent an accident. Lincoln [car manufacturer] just released its Lincoln 360 technology, which is almost like an autonomous-driving vehicle. Pretty much all of the Ford models have some type of driver assistance package."

The rise in technology could also mean higher prices for vehicles. Many of the driver-assist and safety features being attached to cars these days can cost thousands of dollars. It will fall on the auto manufacturers—and, to a lesser extent, the dealers—to try to make these vehicles affordable for the general public.



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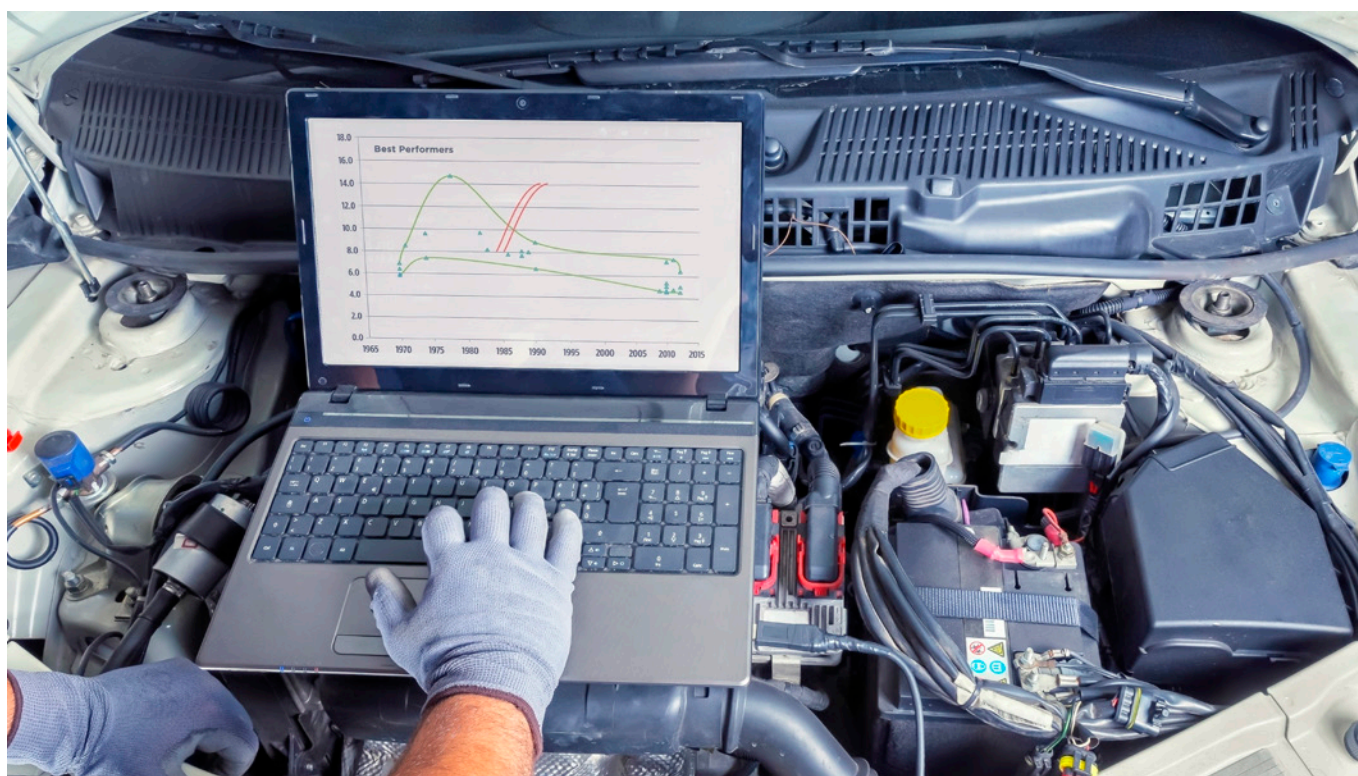


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\*Sales ranking based on 2018 car and truck sales report of the Kansas City Region of Lincoln Motor Company.





“Whether it’s on every car will be determined by the sales rates of those vehicles,” Politte said. “The technology comes at a cost. At some point, if all of their available cars are self-driving, what do people who can’t afford them do? That’s something the manufacturer is going to figure out or something the dealer is going to figure out with great values on cars—something we’ve always done.”

#### REPAIR INDUSTRY TECHNOLOGY

Another trend the auto industry is seeing because of the rise of technology actually lies in the repair space. While driver assistance is helping limit accidents, it’s also making repairs more expensive and more difficult.

What used to be a minor fender bender may now be what collision professionals call “severe” fixes. That’s because today’s cars have sensors and cameras in the back bumper for backing up or blind-spot detection. These pieces of equipment, which can be as small as a nickel, may cost upward of \$300 apiece.

“We call it a technical tsunami,” said Christy Jones, owner and operator at R Jones Collision in Des Moines. “We are getting hit with all of these advances in technology, metal and repair procedures. Every day there’s something new on these cars, and it’s such a wide variety of things.”

There’s also a need to continuously train mechanics. Because modern cars are made out of different types of alloys—as opposed to steel, which was commonplace more than a decade ago—repair shops have to be wary of what types of tools they use. Jones said using the wrong tools can actually lead to corrosion in some cases.

But while technology is increasing costs, it’s ultimately making vehicles safer, which is important in our society of hyper distraction. Jones said she’s seen a shift in the types of accidents that come through her shop, with an increase in rear-end collisions. The auto repair industry used to see more accidents in coordination with weather—snow, ice, rain—but now it’s generally busy year-round.



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“Whether it be cellphones, life in general or what you’re thinking about, [people] are busy and always want to be doing something,” Jones said. “The car is just another place to stay busy. We’ve seen a dramatic rise in rear-end collisions because people aren’t paying attention, and we can be just as busy in the summertime as the wintertime.”

#### CROSSOVER SUVs INCREASE IN POPULARITY

The rise of the crossover sport utility vehicle and the decline of the sedan has been well-documented nationally, and Des Moines is seeing very similar trends. The crossover SUV has hit car dealerships by storm as millennials start raising families and gas prices stay low.

“The crossover segment is the hottest segment in the industry,” said Mark Hummel, general manager at Hummel’s Nissan in Des Moines. “Everybody up and down the line, whether they be mainline manufacturers or luxury manufacturers, they’re trying to get more and more crossovers into their lineup. That’s the hot spot of the market.”

Crossover SUVs boast a sharp look with great flexibility and size, making them a hybrid between a sedan and a traditional SUV. “They handle a lot like a sedan but have the right height and size like an SUV,” said Scott Long, general manager at BMW of Des Moines. “It helps to have a vehicle that is very versatile with families and outdoor activities.”

Because the new-car industry is seeing the decline in sedans—some manufacturers have even stopped production of sedans—used-car dealerships are seeing that market heat up. Sedans are harder to find, so when they’re on the market, prices rise.

“Because they aren’t selling that car new, it puts less on the used-car market,” said Tom Wong, owner of Tom’s Auto Sales in Des Moines. “That makes them very valuable and they sell quicker because [there are fewer] of them.”



### CAR BUYERS, DO YOUR RESEARCH

Buying a vehicle, especially in an industry that continually shifts, can be a daunting task. But Des Moines has options to help those in the market.

The key when looking for a vehicle to purchase is to do your research. Much of the buying process can be done online, so when you actually go to the dealership, you are armed with information.

“Buyers should have a really good idea before they get here,” said Long, who has been in the business for about 20 years. “The internet age has made it so there are multiple ways to communicate. You can text, you can call, you can email. Just do your research, shop around and go to websites that tell you average prices.”

While the internet is a great place to go to do your research, it’s hard to mimic the look and feel of the car unless you actually pay the dealership a visit.

“I still say the most important thing when making a selection of a vehicle is actually to stop by the dealership and drive it and make sure it fits exactly what you want it to do and suits your needs,” said JP Phillips, general manager at Toyota of Des Moines. “That part of the equation never changes. A real critical component of making it a good decision is actually driving the vehicle.”

For entry-level buyers, used cars are the way to go. They can be affordable but still provide good value, especially if you buy through a reputable dealership. When you’re looking for a used vehicle, it’s not all about the looks—it’s about getting the most bang for your buck.

“I would suggest that they forget about a sporty, cute car and concentrate on a car that will give them good service,” Wong said. “There are several cars out there that will do that.”

### SAFETY IS A TOP PRIORITY

Many of Des Moines’ auto industry experts cite safety as the No. 1 concern for today’s car buyer. With new technologies being implemented into cars every day, customers continue to find the newest



and best features out there.

“Everybody is asking about it now,” Hummel said. “The automatic braking, lane departure, blind-spot warning—all of the features. And it’s been incorporated into manufacturers’ full lineups, which is really neat.”

Car manufactures around the world have put a focus on safety, with some even going as far as to promise vehicles that are “death-proof” in the next decade, meaning the trend doesn’t look to be slowing down anytime soon.

“There’s been a huge shift in safety for manufacturers,” Phillips said. “And that continues to be the No. 1 priority for customers, and I believe it will be for the foreseeable future.” ★





## BMW of Des Moines

WHAT MAKES YOUR BUSINESS UNIQUE? Our people.

TELL US ABOUT YOUR PEOPLE. We have a variety of employees. Men and women and the common theme is that they are all lowans and care about their communities as well as their work place

WHAT DO YOU DRIVE? Hopefully by publication the X7 I ordered will be burning gas!

WHAT ARE YOU MOST EXCITED ABOUT IN NEW MODELS OR TRENDS? The debut of the largest BMW ever is here!

Full 3rd row capability. BMW will have the youngest model line up in the highline market by June

WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST CAR? 1984 Ford Tempo 4 door.

SHARE YOUR MOST MEMORABLE CAR MOMENT. That is tough as I have been working in the car business for 20 years. Maybe the 1st vehicle I bought on my own. It was a forest green Mitsubishi Mighty Max pickup with a manual transmission. Sometimes I wish I still had the vehicle to pass to my kids.



BMW of Des Moines



## MARK HUMMEL

DEALER PRINCIPAL

**Hummel's Nissan**

2019 is a special year at Hummel's Nissan. My grandfather and his two brothers began selling and repairing automobiles in Beaverdale in 1929 – 90 years ago. Their philosophy was very straightforward – provide quality products backed by outstanding service. My father and his two brothers followed in their footsteps, becoming Iowa's first Nissan dealer in 1969 – 50 years ago. Today, alongside my brothers, I am honored to carry on our family's legacy as a third generation owner of Hummel's Nissan.

Now, as we celebrate 90 years as a family-owned business and 50 years as a Nissan dealership, we rededicate ourselves to those time-tested principles that have become a family tradition. Today we represent the finest, most technologically advanced, and safest Nissan vehicles ever produced. And, we strive everyday to stand behind those products with exceptional customer service and dedication to our customers.

This is our commitment to you from Hummel's Nissan.







## TOM WONG

PRESIDENT  
Tom's Auto Group

Tom's Auto Group is Iowa's largest independent auto dealer, in business for more than 30 years. We offer the largest selection of vehicles with competitive prices. We have about 500 cars and trucks in stock that range mostly between \$5,000 and \$10,000, providing you with top selection. Most of our inventory

comes direct from our local car dealerships right here in town. We are a locally run, honest and reputable dealership with a team of people whose commitment, loyalty and passion for this business is demonstrated in every sale. We will soon be adding a 5th location to our current 4 locations around greater Des Moines.



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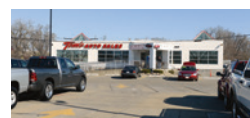
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## CHRISTY JONES

OWNER

### R Jones Collision 1

As vehicle manufacturers move deeper into the autonomous vehicle arena, we also enter a more challenging realm for the collision repair industry. New and more complex technologies are found on more and more of today's new vehicles. R Jones Collision 1 is committed to keeping pace with these innovative developments.

Features such as lane-keep assist, blind spot detection, adaptive cruise control and automatic braking contain a network of wiring and modules that work with cameras, sensors, and radar to detect

and calculate speed and distance in fractions of a second and alert the driver about potential threats. Errors in repairing any component of these highly sensitive electronic components could result in catastrophe.

R Jones is a second generation auto body shop, owned and operated by Christy Jones. We have been helping our customers since 1971. We focus on quality and craftsmanship, without compromising the safety of your vehicle. We write it right, repair it right and bill it right.

