

# Consumer Car Corner

## Being Fully Informed Can Save You Money

(NAPSA)—Five years ago, Anne Lansing went through what she calls one of the most exciting purchases of her life—buying her first new car.

“After years of saving and driving a used car, I was finally getting a new car,” Lansing said. But amid all the excitement, she also had a sense of anxiety about such a large purchase. “I looked at a few pamphlets from the dealer, but didn’t really understand some of the features and why they were important. I pretty much had to take the dealer’s word for it.”

When Lansing began planning to buy another car during the summer auto sales, she promised herself she wouldn’t make the same mistake. Before even looking at a car, she spent hours on the Internet comparing makes and models and deciding which features were important and which she could live without.

“Buying a car is often trying and confusing, especially for people who don’t know much about cars,” said veteran automotive journalist Ann Job. “The best thing to do is to gather as much knowledge as possible before walking into a showroom. This way, you’re not at the mercy of a dealership salesperson, and you have a better chance of getting what you want at a fair price.”

Sites such as MSN Autos (<http://autos.msn.com>) offer free expert and consumer reviews of hundreds of cars and trucks. MSN Autos also includes select content from Consumer Reports, one of the most trusted and respected sources of consumer information.

“Between SUVs, hybrids and



**The Internet can be a useful source of information when buying a new or used car.**

traditional sedans, people have more automotive choices than ever,” Job said. “While this is a good thing for the consumer overall, it can also be confusing, even overwhelming. You can’t rely on a dealer to tell you which choice is best for you.”

Even after Lansing pinpointed the car she planned on buying, she continued using the Internet to manage everything from financing to getting around town. For instance, with gas prices constantly on the rise, she uses MSN Autos to find the cheapest gas in her area.

“Gas prices can vary quite a bit within the same city,” Lansing said. “When you’re trying to keep to a budget, that makes a big difference. Many times, I’ll go online before I jump in the car and plot my route based on where the cheap gas is.”

Job says that’s exactly the way drivers should be using the Internet. “Whether you’re buying a car or just filling up the tank, the key to being a good vehicle owner is to educate yourself,” she said. “Time spent online now can save you a lot of time and money in the long run.”