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Carlos Navarro

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Domestic Sales Of Motor Vehicles Down 20 Percent In January-september, But Exports Increase Slightly

by Carlos Navarro
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According to a study by the private Banco Nacional de Mexico (BANAMEX), domestic sales of motor vehicles remained at very depressed levels during January-September of this year, although the slump was offset slightly by an increase in exports of automobiles and other vehicles. The report put domestic sales during January-September at 425,500 units, a decline of 20% from the 531,000 units sold in the first nine months of 1992. On the other hand, the report said exports during the same nine-month period reached 329,000 units, a slight increase from the 300,000 exported in January-September 1992. BANAMEX attributed the increase in exports to a recovery in US demand for US models assembled in Mexico and the opening of new markets, such as Japan. The report said a related factor was an improvement in the quality of autos shipped to the US, since quality concerns in the past had limited Mexican exports to the US. BANAMEX predicted that domestic vehicle sales will remain slow during 1994, although an increase is anticipated toward the end of the year, especially for utility vehicles, such as pickups, heavy trucks and tractor trailers. In other automotive industry news, US-based Ford Motor Co. in late November reopened a plant in Chihuahua city to manufacture state-of-the-art 2-liter "Z" engines for use in automobiles with fuel injection. The engine is also produced at Ford plants in England and Germany. According to company spokespersons, the plant which had been closed for more than two years for modernization and upgrades is targeting annual production at 400,000 engines. The renovated plant, which will operate with modern computerized equipment, now includes its own waste water treatment facility.
(Sources: La Jornada, 11/30/93, 12/01/93)

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