BY DANA BRUXVOORT
Staff Reporter

The economic crisis has left people trying harder to make ends meet.

An increase in car maintenance is one of the many symptoms of the economic downturn, as people struggle to keep their vehicles on the road.

“People are worried that they’re going to get more tolls per mile on their vehicles,” said Lovegreen, president of Lovegreen Ford Chrysler Jeep.

Lovegreen said he sees a learning curve coming for people who finance on the car themselves.

“I see changes from month to month in their behavior and how they’re managing on the car themselves,” said Walsh.

Walsh said he changes the oil in his car himself, and he also checks his own fluid levels. Doing maintenance on the car himself saves him money, he said.

“Someone who is trying to make ends meet is going to look at the car differently,” said Conway.

Conway said he tries to help his customers find the best way to extend the life of their vehicles.

“Most people keep their vehicles longer, they have more maintenance issues that they wouldn't necessarily address,” said Lovegreen.

Lovegreen said his business has not changed much yet. He said he is educating his customers on what they can do to add to the longevity of their vehicles.

Although his service business has slowed, Lovegreen said he has been a little surprised at the market for used vehicles, as demand is still fairly steady.

“Without question [new car sales] will rebound,” he said. “The vehicles still is fairly steady.”

Lovegreen said he has seen a slight increase in new car sales, but that the increase will become more apparent in six months to a year.

“Overall talking to customers, I see … many of them aren’t keeping up with monthly payments anymore as they go out and buy new ones,” Conway said. “They’re probably doing more preventative maintenance that they did before.”

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