IOWA NEW VEHICLE REGISTRATIONS

Overview. Information on the number of new vehicle registrations (for cars, multipurpose vehicles, and light trucks) in Iowa is provided by the Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT) and is derived from tax records collected by the DOT. The DOT collects this information throughout the year and totals it monthly.

Historical Trend. The moving annual total of new vehicle registrations declined significantly from 164,500 vehicles in November 2004 to 98,600 in December 2009. Growth in the annual number of new registrations turned positive in May 2010. While remaining below the previous peak, new vehicle registrations recovered significantly through the end of 2015, with registrations totaling 140,480 that year.

Beginning in March 2016, the annual total of new vehicle registrations compared to the prior 12-month total declined for 19 months. Beginning October 2017, the 12-month total improved compared to the prior year for 12 months. However, beginning in October 2018, the year-over-year comparison again declined for 16 straight months.

Current Status. In April 2020, the annual total of new vehicle registrations increased 3.2% when compared to the 12-month sum in April 2019. However, compared to the total for April 2019, this month’s total vehicle registrations decreased by 2,255, or 20.1% (Chart 3). The decrease, a reversal of the trend of increases, likely reflects decreased vehicle purchases due to COVID-19.

More Data. Additional information can be found on the Legislative Services Agency’s Economic Trends webpage, which includes links to source sites and the underlying data for each Economic Trends indicator.