

AMERICAS CARMART INC  
Form 10-K  
June 12, 2015

UNITED STATES  
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION  
Washington, D.C. 20549

FORM 10-K

(Mark One)

ANNUAL REPORT PURSUANT TO SECTION 13 OR 15(d) OF THE SECURITIES EXCHANGE ACT OF 1934  
For the fiscal year ended April 30, 2015

OR

TRANSITION REPORT PURSUANT TO SECTION 13 OR 15(d) OF THE SECURITIES EXCHANGE ACT OF 1934

For the transition period from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_  
Commission file number 0-14939

AMERICA'S CAR-MART, INC.

(Exact name of registrant as specified in its charter)

Texas  
(State or other jurisdiction of incorporation or organization)

63-0851141  
(IRS Employer Identification No)

802 Southeast Plaza Avenue, Suite 200  
Bentonville, Arkansas  
(Address of principal executive offices)

72712  
(Zip Code)

(479) 464-9944  
(Registrant's telephone number, including area code)

Securities registered pursuant to Section 12(b) of the Act:

Title of each class	Name of exchange of which registered
Common Stock, \$.01 par value	NASDAQ Global Select Market

Securities registered pursuant to section 12(g) of the Act:  
None

Indicate by check mark if the registrant is a well-known seasoned issuer, as defined in Rule 405 of the Securities Act. Yes  No

Indicate by check mark if the registrant is not required to file reports pursuant to Section 13 or Section 15(d) of the Act. Yes  No

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant (1) has filed all reports required to be filed by Section 13 or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 during the preceding 12 months (or for such shorter period that the registrant was required to file such reports), and (2) has been subject to such filing requirements for the past 90 days. Yes  No

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant has submitted electronically and posted on its corporate Website, if any, every Interactive Data File required to be submitted and posted pursuant to Rule 405 of Regulation S-T during the preceding 12 months (or for such shorter period that the registrant was required to submit and post such files). Yes

No

Indicate by check mark if disclosure of delinquent filers pursuant to Item 405 of Regulation S-K is not contained herein, and will not be contained, to the best of registrant's knowledge, in definitive proxy or information statements incorporated by reference in Part III of this Form 10-K or any amendment to this Form 10-K.

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant is a large accelerated filer, an accelerated filer, a non-accelerated filer, or a smaller reporting company. See the definitions of "large accelerated filer," "accelerated filer" and "smaller reporting company" in Rule 12b-2 of the Exchange Act. (Check one):

Large accelerated filer       Accelerated filer   

Non-accelerated filer       Smaller reporting company   

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant is a shell company (as defined in Rule 12b-2 of the Act). Yes  No

The aggregate market value of the registrant's voting and non-voting common equity held by non-affiliates on October 31, 2014 was \$394,127,686 (8,571,720 shares), based on the closing price of the registrant's common stock of \$45.98.

There were 8,513,473 shares of the registrant's common stock outstanding as of June 5, 2015.

#### DOCUMENTS INCORPORATED BY REFERENCE

Portions of the registrant's Proxy Statement to be furnished to stockholders in connection with its 2015 Annual Meeting of Stockholders are incorporated by reference in response to Part III of this report.

PART I

Forward-Looking Statements

This Annual Report on Form 10-K and the documents incorporated by reference in this Annual Report on Form 10-K contain “forward-looking statements” within the meaning of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. These forward-looking statements address the Company’s future objectives, plans and goals, as well as the Company’s intent, beliefs and current expectations regarding future operating performance, and can generally be identified by words such as “may”, “will”, “should”, “could”, “believe”, “expect”, “anticipate”, “intend”, “plan”, “foresee” and words or phrases. Specific events addressed by these forward-looking statements include, but are not limited to:

- new dealership openings;
- performance of new dealerships;
- same dealership revenue growth;
  - future revenue growth;
- receivables growth as related to revenue growth;
  - gross margin percentages;
  - interest rates;
  - future credit losses;
- the Company’s collection results, including but not limited to collections during income tax refund periods;
  - seasonality;
- security breaches, cyber-attacks, or fraudulent activity;
  - compliance with tax regulations;
  - the Company’s business and growth strategies;
  - financing the majority of growth from profits; and
  - having adequate liquidity to satisfy its capital needs.

These forward-looking statements are based on the Company’s current estimates and assumptions and involve various risks and uncertainties. As a result, you are cautioned that these forward-looking statements are not guarantees of future performance, and that actual results could differ materially from those projected in these forward-looking statements. Factors that may cause actual results to differ materially from the Company’s projections include those risks described elsewhere in this report, as well as:

- the availability of credit facilities to support the Company’s business;
  - the Company’s ability to underwrite and collect its contracts effectively;
    - competition;
    - dependence on existing management;
- availability of quality vehicles at prices that will be affordable to customers;
- changes in consumer finance laws or regulations, including but not limited to rules and regulations that have recently been enacted or could be enacted by federal and state governments; and
- general economic conditions in the markets in which the Company operates, including but not limited to fluctuations in gas prices, grocery prices and employment levels.

The Company undertakes no obligation to update or revise any forward-looking statements, whether as a result of new information, future events or otherwise. You are cautioned not to place undue reliance on these forward-looking statements, which speak only as of the dates on which they are made.



## Item 1. Business

### Business and Organization

America's Car-Mart, Inc., a Texas corporation initially formed in 1981 (the "Company"), is one of the largest publicly held automotive retailers in the United States focused exclusively on the "Integrated Auto Sales and Finance" segment of the used car market. References to the "Company" include the Company's consolidated subsidiaries. The Company's operations are principally conducted through its two operating subsidiaries, America's Car Mart, Inc., an Arkansas corporation ("Car-Mart of Arkansas"), and Colonial Auto Finance, Inc., an Arkansas corporation ("Colonial"). Collectively, Car-Mart of Arkansas and Colonial are referred to herein as "Car-Mart." The Company primarily sells older model used vehicles and provides financing for substantially all of its customers. Many of the Company's customers have limited financial resources and would not qualify for conventional financing as a result of limited credit histories or past credit problems. As of April 30, 2015, the Company operated 141 dealerships located primarily in small cities throughout the South-Central United States.

### Business Strategy

In general, it is the Company's objective to continue to expand its business using the same business model that has been developed and used by Car-Mart for over 30 years. This business strategy focuses on:

**Collecting Customer Accounts.** Collecting customer accounts is perhaps the single most important aspect of operating an Integrated Auto Sales and Finance used car business and is a focal point for dealership level and corporate office personnel on a daily basis. The Company measures and monitors the collection results of its dealerships using internally developed delinquency and account loss standards. Substantially all associate incentive compensation is tied directly or indirectly to collection results. Over the last five fiscal years, the Company's annual credit losses as a percentage of sales have ranged from a low of 20.8% in fiscal 2011 to a high of 27.4% in fiscal 2014 (average of 23.6%). The fiscal 2014 annual credit losses as a percentage of sales was 25.7% excluding the effect of the increase in the allowance for credit losses made in the third quarter of fiscal 2014. Fiscal 2015 credit losses as a percentage of sales was 25.5%. The Company believes that it can continue to be successful provided it maintains its credit losses within its historical credit loss range. See Item 1A. Risk Factors for further discussion.

**Maintaining a Decentralized Operation.** The Company's dealerships will continue to operate on a decentralized basis. Each dealership is ultimately responsible for buying (via an assigned corporate office purchasing agent) and selling its own vehicles, making credit decisions and collecting the contracts it originates in accordance with established policies and procedures. Most customers make their payments in person at one of the Company's dealerships. This decentralized structure is complemented by the oversight and involvement of corporate office management and the maintenance of centralized financial controls, including monitoring proprietary credit scoring, establishing standards for down-payments and contract terms as well as an internal compliance function.

**Expanding Through Controlled Organic Growth.** The Company plans to continue to expand its operations by increasing revenues at existing dealerships and opening new dealerships. The Company will continue to view organic growth as its primary source for growth. The Company has made significant infrastructure investments during the last five years in order to improve performance of existing dealerships and to grow its dealership count. These improvements have resulted in favorable operating results in recent years and have allowed the Company to successfully grow dealership count. The Company ended fiscal 2015 with 141 locations, a net increase of seven locations over the prior year-end, and intends to add new dealerships selectively in what it considers to be good, solid communities with a targeted number of ten dealership openings for fiscal 2016, subject to favorable operating performance. These plans, of course, are subject to change based on both internal and external factors.



**Selling Basic Transportation.** The Company will continue to focus on selling basic and affordable transportation to its customers. The Company's average retail sales price was \$9,680 per unit in fiscal 2015. By selling vehicles at this price point, the Company is able to keep the terms of its installment sales contracts relatively short (overall portfolio weighted average of 30.2 months), while requiring relatively low payments.

**Operating in Smaller Communities.** The majority of the Company's dealerships are located in cities and towns with a population of 50,000 or less. The Company believes that by operating in smaller communities it experiences better collection results. Further, the Company believes that operating costs, such as salaries, rent and advertising, are lower in smaller communities than in major metropolitan areas.

**Enhanced Management Talent and Experience.** It has been the Company's practice to try to hire honest and hardworking individuals to fill entry level positions, nurture and develop these associates, and attempt to fill the vast majority of its managerial positions from within the Company. By promoting from within, the Company believes it is able to train its associates in the Car-Mart way of doing business, maintain the Company's unique culture and develop the loyalty of its associates by providing opportunity for advancement. However, the Company has recently focused, to a larger extent, on looking outside of the Company for associates possessing requisite skills and who share the values and appreciate the Company's unique culture developed over the years. The Company has been able to attract quality individuals via its Manager in Training Program as well as other key areas such as Human Resources, Purchasing, Collections, Information Technology, Legal, Compliance and Portfolio Analysis. Management has determined that it will be increasingly difficult to grow the Company without looking for outside talent. The Company's operating success, as well as the challenging macro-economic environment, has positively affected recruitment of outside talent in recent years, and the Company currently expects this to continue.

**Cultivating Customer Relationships.** The Company believes that developing and maintaining a relationship with its customers is critical to the success of the Company. A large percentage of sales at mature dealerships are made to repeat customers, and the Company estimates an additional 10% to 15% of sales result from customer referrals. By developing a personal relationship with its customers, the Company believes it is in a better position to assist a customer, and the customer is more likely to cooperate with the Company should the customer experience financial difficulty during the term of his or her installment contract with the Company. The Company is able to cultivate these relationships as the majority of its customers make their payments in person at one of the Company's dealerships on a weekly or bi-weekly basis.

#### Business Strengths

The Company believes it possesses a number of strengths or advantages that distinguish it from most of its competitors. These business strengths include:

**Experienced and Motivated Management.** The Company's executive operating officers have significant experience in the industry and an average tenure of over 15 years. Several of Car-Mart's dealership managers have been with the Company for more than 10 years. Each dealership manager is compensated, at least in part, based upon the net income of his or her dealership. A significant portion of the compensation of senior management is incentive based and tied to operating profits.

**Proven Business Practices.** The Company's operations are highly structured. While dealerships are operated on a decentralized basis, the Company has established policies, procedures and business practices for virtually every aspect of a dealership's operations. Detailed online operating manuals are available to assist the dealership manager and office, sales and collections personnel in performing their daily tasks. As a result, each dealership is operated in a uniform manner. Further, corporate office personnel monitor the dealerships' operations through weekly visits and a number of daily, weekly and monthly communications and reports.

Low Cost Operator. The Company has structured its dealership and corporate office operations to minimize operating costs. The number of associates employed at the dealership level is dictated by the number of active customer accounts each dealership services. Associate compensation is standardized for each dealership position. Other operating costs are closely monitored and scrutinized. Technology is utilized to maximize efficiency. The Company believes its operating costs as a percentage of revenues, and per unit sold, are among the lowest in the industry.



Well-Capitalized / Limited External Capital Required for Growth. As of April 30, 2015, the Company's debt to equity ratio (Revolving credit facilities divided by Total equity on the Consolidated Balance Sheet) was 0.45 to 1.0, which the Company believes is lower than many of its competitors. Further, the Company believes it can fund a significant amount of its planned growth from net income generated from operations. Of the external capital that will be needed to fund growth, the Company plans to draw on its existing credit facilities, or renewals or replacements of those facilities.

Significant Expansion Opportunities. The Company generally targets smaller communities in which to locate its dealerships (i.e., populations from 20,000 to 50,000), but is also successful in larger cities such as Tulsa, Oklahoma; Lexington, Kentucky; Springfield, Missouri and Little Rock, Arkansas. The Company believes there are numerous suitable communities within the ten states in which the Company currently operates and other contiguous states to satisfy anticipated dealership growth for the next several years. As previously discussed, the Company plans to continue to add new dealerships going forward depending upon operational success. Existing dealerships will continue to be analyzed to ensure that they are producing desired results and have potential to provide adequate returns on invested capital.

## Operations

Operating Segment. Each dealership is an operating segment with its results regularly reviewed by the Company's chief operating decision maker in an effort to make decisions about resources to be allocated to the segment and to assess its performance. Individual dealerships meet the aggregation criteria for reporting purposes under the current accounting guidance. The Company operates in the Integrated Auto Sales and Finance segment of the used car market. In this industry, the nature of the sale and the financing of the transaction, financing processes, the type of customer and the methods used to distribute the Company's products and services, including the actual servicing of the contracts as well as the regulatory environment in which the Company operates, all have similar characteristics. Each of our individual dealerships is similar in nature and only engages in the selling and financing of used vehicles. All individual dealerships have similar operating characteristics. As such, individual dealerships have been aggregated into one reportable segment.

Dealership Organization. Dealerships are operated on a decentralized basis. Each dealership is responsible for buying (with the assistance of a corporate office buyer) and selling vehicles, making credit decisions, and servicing and collecting the installment contracts it originates. Dealerships also maintain their own records and make daily deposits. Dealership-level financial statements are prepared by the corporate office on a monthly basis. Depending on the number of active customer accounts, a dealership may have as few as three or as many as 28 full-time associates employed at that location. Associate positions at a large dealership may include a dealership manager, assistant dealership manager, manager trainee, office manager, assistant office manager, service manager, buyer, collections personnel, salesmen and dealership attendants. Dealerships are generally open Monday through Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. The Company has both regular and satellite dealerships. Satellite dealerships are similar to regular dealerships, except that they tend to be smaller and sell fewer vehicles and their financial performance is not captured in a stand-alone financial statement but instead is included in the financial results of the sponsoring regular dealership.

Dealership Locations and Facilities. Below is a summary of dealerships opened during the fiscal years ended April 30, 2015, 2014 and 2013:

	Years Ended April 30,		
	2015	2014	2013
Dealerships at beginning of year	134	124	114
New dealerships opened/acquired	7	10	10
Dealerships closed	-	-	-
Dealerships at end of year	141	134	124

Below is a summary of dealership locations by state as of April 30, 2015, 2014 and 2013:

Dealerships by State	As of April 30,		
	2015	2014	2013
Arkansas	38	38	38
Oklahoma	26	24	21
Missouri	18	18	17
Alabama	15	14	13
Texas	14	14	14
Kentucky	12	11	10
Tennessee	6	5	5
Georgia	6	4	1
Mississippi	5	5	4
Indiana	1	1	1
Total	141	134	124

Dealerships are typically located in smaller communities. As of April 30, 2015, approximately 75% of the Company's dealerships were located in cities with populations of less than 50,000. Dealerships are located on leased or owned property between one and three acres in size. When opening a new dealership, the Company will typically use an existing structure on the property to conduct business, or purchase a modular facility while business at the new location develops. Dealership facilities typically range in size from 1,500 to 5,000 square feet.

**Purchasing.** The Company purchases vehicles primarily from wholesalers, new car dealers, individuals and auctions. The majority of vehicle purchasing is performed by the Company's buyers, although dealership managers are authorized to purchase vehicles as needed. A buyer will purchase vehicles for one to four dealerships depending on the size of the dealerships. Buyers report to the dealership manager, or managers, for whom they make purchases, and to a regional purchasing director. The regional purchasing directors report to the Director of Purchasing. The Company centrally monitors the quantity and quality of vehicles purchased and continuously compares the cost of vehicles purchased to outside valuation sources and holds responsible parties accountable for results.

Generally, the Company's buyers purchase vehicles between six and 12 years of age with 90,000 to 140,000 miles, and pay between \$3,000 and \$7,000 per vehicle. The Company focuses on providing basic transportation to its customers. The Company generally does not purchase sports cars or luxury cars. Some of the more popular vehicles the Company sells include the Chevrolet Impala, Chevrolet Malibu, Chrysler 300, Ford Taurus, Ford Fusion, Dodge Ram Pickup, Ford Explorer and the Ford F-150 Pickup. The Company sells a significant number of trucks and sport utility vehicles. The Company's buyers inspect and test-drive almost every vehicle they purchase. Buyers attempt to purchase vehicles that require little or no repair as the Company has limited facilities to repair or recondition vehicles.



**Selling, Marketing and Advertising.** Dealerships generally maintain an inventory of 25 to 100 vehicles depending on the maturity of the dealership and the time of the year. Inventory turns over approximately 8 to 9 times each year. Selling is done principally by the dealership manager, assistant manager, manager trainee or sales associate. Sales associates are paid a commission for sales that they make in addition to an hourly wage. Sales are made on an “as is” basis; however, customers are given an option to purchase a service contract which covers certain vehicle components and assemblies. For covered components and assemblies, the Company coordinates service with third party service centers with which the Company typically has previously negotiated labor rates and mark-up percentages on parts. Substantially all of the Company’s customers elect to purchase a service contract when purchasing a vehicle. Additionally, the Company offers its customers to whom financing is extended a payment protection plan product. This product contractually obligates the Company to cancel the remaining amount owed on a contract where the vehicle has been totaled, as defined in the plan, or the vehicle has been stolen. This product is available in most of the states in which the Company operates and substantially all financed customers elect to purchase this product when purchasing a vehicle in those states.

The Company’s objective is to offer its customers basic transportation at a fair price and treat each customer in such a manner as to earn his or her repeat business. The Company attempts to build a positive reputation in each community where it operates and generate new business from such reputation as well as from customer referrals. The Company estimates that approximately 10% to 15% of the Company’s sales result from customer referrals. The Company recognizes repeat customers with silver, gold and platinum plaques representing the purchase of 5, 10 and 15 vehicles, respectively. These plaques are prominently displayed at the dealership where the vehicles were purchased. For mature dealerships, a large percentage of sales are to repeat customers.

The Company primarily advertises in local newspapers, on the radio, on television and on the internet. In addition, the Company periodically conducts promotional sales campaigns in order to increase sales.

**Underwriting and Finance.** The Company provides financing to substantially all of its customers who purchase a vehicle at one of its dealerships. The Company only provides financing to its customers for the purchase of its vehicles, and the Company does not provide any type of financing to non-customers. The Company’s installment sales contracts typically include down payments ranging from 0% to 17% (average of 7%), terms ranging from 18 months to 42 months (average of 30.2 months), and annual interest charges ranging from 14% to 15% (weighted average of 14.9% at April 30, 2015). The Company requires that payments be made on a weekly, bi-weekly, semi-monthly or monthly basis to coincide with the day the customer is paid by his or her employer. Upon the customer and the Company reaching a preliminary agreement as to financing terms, the Company obtains a credit application from the customer which includes information regarding employment, residence and credit history, personal references and a detailed budget itemizing the customer’s monthly income and expenses. Certain information is then verified by Company personnel. After the verification process, the dealership manager makes the decision to accept, reject or modify (perhaps obtain a greater down payment or suggest a lower priced vehicle) the proposed transaction. In general, the dealership manager attempts to assess the stability and character of the applicant. The dealership manager who makes the credit decision is ultimately responsible for collecting the contract, and his or her compensation is directly related to the collection results of his or her dealership. The Company provides centralized support to the dealership manager in the form of a proprietary credit scoring system used for monitoring and other supervisory assistance to assist with the credit decision. Credit quality is monitored centrally by corporate office personnel on a daily, weekly and monthly basis.

**Collections.** All of the Company’s retail installment contracts are serviced by Company personnel at the dealership level. A majority of the Company’s customers make their payments in person at the dealership where they purchased their vehicle; however, in an effort to make paying convenient for its customers, the Company offers a variety of payment options. Customers can send their payments through the mail, set up ACH auto draft, make mobile and online payments, and make payments at certain money service centers. Each dealership closely monitors its customer accounts using the Company’s proprietary receivables and collections software that stratifies past due accounts by the

number of days past due. The vice presidents of operations and the area operations managers routinely review and monitor the status of customer collections to ensure collection activities are conducted in compliance with applicable policies and procedures. In addition, the Support Operations Officer oversees the collections department and provides timely oversight and additional accountability on a consistent basis. The Company also has a Director of Collection Services who assists with managing the Company's servicing and collections practices and provides additional monitoring and training. The Company believes that the timely response to past due accounts is critical to its collections success.

The Company has established standards with respect to the percentage of accounts one and two weeks past due 15 or more days past due and 30 or more days past due (delinquency standards), and the percentage of accounts where the vehicle was repossessed or the account was charged off that month (account loss standard).

The Company works very hard to keep its delinquency percentages low and not to repossess vehicles. Accounts two days late are sent a notice in the mail. Accounts three days late are contacted by telephone. Notes from each telephone contact are electronically maintained in the Company's computer system. If a customer becomes severely delinquent in his or her payments, and management determines that timely collection of future payments is not probable, the Company will take steps to repossess the vehicle. The Company attempts to resolve payment delinquencies amicably prior to repossessing a vehicle. Periodically, the Company enters into contract modifications with its customers to extend or modify the payment terms. The Company only enters into a contract modification or extension if it believes such action will increase the amount of monies the Company will ultimately realize on the customer's account and will increase the likelihood of the customer being able to pay off the vehicle contract. At the time of modification, the Company expects to collect amounts due including accrued interest at the contractual interest rate for the period of delay. Other than the extension of time, concessions are not granted to customers at the time of modification. Modifications are minor and are made for pay day changes, minor vehicle repairs and other reasons. For those vehicles that are repossessed, the majority are returned or surrendered by the customer on a voluntary basis. Other repossessions are performed by Company personnel or third party repossession agents. Depending on the condition of a repossessed vehicle, it is either resold on a retail basis through a Company dealership or sold for cash on a wholesale basis primarily through physical or online auctions.

**New Dealership Openings.** Senior management, with the assistance of the corporate office staff, will make decisions with respect to the communities in which to locate a new dealership and the specific sites within those communities. New dealerships have historically been located in the general proximity of existing dealerships to facilitate the corporate office's oversight of the Company's dealerships. The Company currently intends to add new dealerships selectively in what it considers to be good, solid communities with a targeted number of openings of eight dealerships for fiscal 2016, subject to favorable operating performance.

The Company's approach with respect to new dealership openings has been one of gradual development. The manager in charge of a new dealership is normally a recently promoted associate who was an assistant manager at a larger dealership and in most cases participated in the formal manager-in-training program. The corporate office provides significant resources and support with pre-opening and initial operations of new dealerships. The facility may be of a modular nature or an existing structure. Historically, new dealerships have operated with a low level of inventory and personnel. As a result of the modest staffing level, the new dealership manager performs a variety of duties (i.e., selling, collecting and administrative tasks) during the early stages of his or her dealership's operations. As the dealership develops and the customer base grows, additional staff is hired.

Monthly sales levels at new dealerships are typically substantially less than sales levels at mature dealerships. Over time, new dealerships gain recognition in their communities, and a combination of customer referrals and repeat business generally facilitate sales growth. Historically, sales growth at new dealerships could exceed 10% per year for a number of years, whereas mature dealerships typically experience annual sales growth but at a lower percentage than new dealerships. Due to continual operational initiatives the Company is able to support higher sales levels, and recently, the Company has raised its volume expectation level of new locations somewhat as infrastructure improvements related to new dealership openings have improved.

New dealerships are generally provided with approximately \$1.5 million to \$2.5 million in capital from the corporate office during the first few years of operation. These funds are used principally to fund receivables growth. After this start-up period, new dealerships can typically begin generating positive cash flow, allowing for some continuing growth in receivables without additional capital from the corporate office. As these dealerships become cash flow positive, a decision is made by senior management to either increase the investment due to favorable return rates on the invested capital, or to deploy capital elsewhere. This limitation of capital to new, as well as existing, dealerships serves as an important operating discipline. Dealerships must be profitable in order to grow and typically new dealerships are profitable within the