



2019 Greater Toledo Auto Show

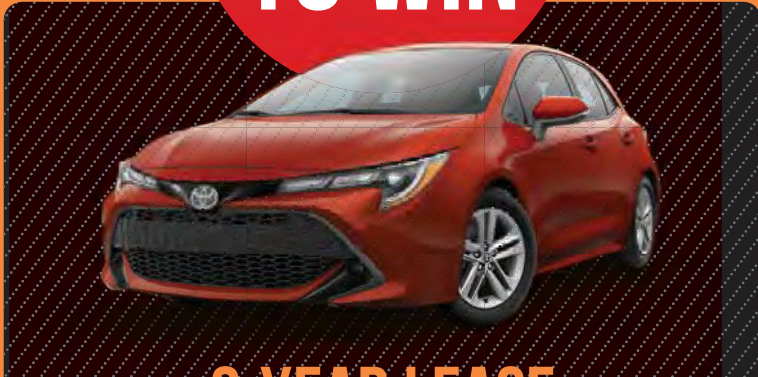
FEB 7-10, 2019
SEAGATE CONVENTION CENTRE

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Come take a spin in one of our award-winning vehicles from Chrysler, Dodge, Jeep, RAM and Fiat! The FCA Ride & Drive Experience* will be open all four days of the show. For hours and more details please visit TOLEDOAUTOSHOW.ORG

*Drivers must be 18 Years or older with a valid drivers license.



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Enter to win a 2-year lease on the 2019 Toyota Corolla Hatchback at any of the NW Ohio Toyota Dealers until Tuesday, February 5 or stop by the SeaGate Convention Centre starting on Thursday, February 7 at 3pm to enter in person. No purchase necessary, rules can be found at TOLEDOAUTOSHOW.ORG.

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ADMISSION

General Admission \$8
Seniors (Age 65+) \$6
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HOURS

Thursday, Feb. 7 3pm – 9pm
Friday, Feb. 8 12pm – 9pm
Saturday, Feb. 9 ... 10am – 9pm
Sunday, Feb. 10 ... 10am – 5pm

SEAGATE CONVENTION CENTRE

401 Jefferson Ave • Toledo, OH 43604

PARKING

- Port Lawrence Parking Garage—FREE Saturday & Sunday ONLY!
- SeaGate Garage—located below the SeaGate Centre
- SeaGate Surface Lots



Auto Toledo Show

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT
TOLEDOAUTOSHOW.ORG

- THURSDAY FEB 7**
- FCA Ride & Drive Experience 3pm to 8pm
 - Toyota Corolla Hatchback 2-Year Lease Giveaway
 - Photo Scavenger Hunt & Selfie Contest
-
- FRIDAY FEB 8**
- FCA Ride & Drive Experience 12pm to 8pm
 - Toyota Corolla Hatchback 2-Year Lease Giveaway
 - Photo Scavenger Hunt & Selfie Contest
-
- SATURDAY FEB 9**
- FCA Ride & Drive Experience 10am to 8pm
 - Balloon Artist 11am to 3pm
 - Face Painting Artist 11am to 3pm
 - Toledo Mud Hens Mascots: 1pm to 3pm
 - Toyota Corolla Hatchback 2-Year Lease Giveaway
 - Photo Scavenger Hunt & Selfie Contest
-
- SUNDAY FEB 10**
- FCA Ride & Drive Experience 10am to 5pm
 - Toledo Mud Hens Mascots: 1pm to 3pm
 - Toyota Corolla Hatchback 2-Year Lease Giveaway
 - Photo Scavenger Hunt & Selfie Contest

2019 GREATER TOLEDO AUTO SHOW

SeaGate Convention Centre

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1. Qualified military personnel and household members of eligible qualifying military personnel are eligible for rebates in addition to all other incentives, depending on model, through Toyota Motor Sales USA, Inc., when leased or financed through Toyota Financial Services. Must take retail delivery from select new dealer stock. See participating dealer or visit buyatoyota.com for complete details. 2. Cash back direct from Toyota Motor Sales, USA, Inc. 3. New 2019 Tacoma SR 4x4 Double Cab Model 7594. Lease based on net cap cost of \$29,276. Lease end purchase option \$25,148. 4. 2019 Highlander LE L4 FWD Model 6942. Lease based on net cap cost of \$28,436. Lease end purchase option \$21,219. 5. New 2019 Corolla (excludes Hatchback) 0% APR Financing for 36 Months - \$27.78 per \$1,000 borrowed OR 0% APR Financing for 48 Months - \$20.83 per \$1,000 borrowed OR 0% APR Financing for 60 Months - \$16.67 per \$1,000 borrowed OR 0% APR Financing for 72 Months - \$13.89 per \$1,000 borrowed. No down payment with approved credit through Toyota Financial Services - Tier 1 Plus and 1 only. Not all customers will qualify for lowest rate. 6. New 2019 Corolla SE Model 1864. Lease based on net cap cost of \$18,513. Lease end purchase option \$11,343. 7. New 2019 Camry LE Model 2532. Lease based on net cap cost of \$21,798. Lease end purchase option \$14,305. 8. See participating dealer or visit buyatoyota.com for complete details. 9. Covers normal factory scheduled service for 2 years or 25,000 miles, whichever comes first. See Toyota dealer for details and exclusions. Valid only in the continental U.S. and Alaska. * Subject to approved credit through Toyota Financial Services. Not all customers will qualify - Tier 1 PLUS customers ONLY. Excludes taxes and local taxes, tags, registration and title, and insurance. Ohio sales tax due at lease inception. License and applicable fees are extra. Other options and dealer charges extra. Your payment may vary depending on final price. Lessee may be charged for excessive wear based on Toyota Financial Services standards for normal use and for mileage in excess of 30,000 miles at the rate of \$0.15 per mile (low mileage lease). \$350 Disposition Fee is due at lease termination. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 & 8: Must take retail delivery from new 2018 and 2019 dealer stock between 1/3/19 and 2/4/19. APR, Customer Cash & Lease offers may not be combined. See participating dealer for complete details. Individual dealer prices and document fees may vary. Offers may vary by region. VEHICLE IMAGES USED FOR ILLUSTRATION PURPOSES ONLY. Expiration for this ad is 2/4/19.



Greater Toledo Auto Show offers no-pressure environment

THE BLADE

Think of the Greater Toledo Auto Show as the practical, down-to-earth cousin of the North American International Auto Show that precedes it.

Whereas the Detroit event in January features the latest makes and models before their consumer release, Toledo's show the following month has cars you could drive home — just not from the show.

"The car show is important for the Toledo market because we're offering something the Detroit show can't in a family-friendly environment without the major crowds," said Jason Perry, general manager of Vin Devers Autohaus of Sylvania, which will display Audi and Mercedes models at the downtown Toledo event.

"The Detroit show is insanely busy, you can barely see the cars," he said. "Here, you can see if the car fits your lifestyle and not feel like you're waiting in line for a ride."

The Toledo Automobile Dealers Association promotes its show as a fun way to kick tires and entertain the family without the pressure of showroom salesmen (dealers aren't legally allowed to make sales on the floor).

"It's a no-pressure environment," Toledo Auto Show Director Kelly Danison said. "People can visit a variety of manufacturers in the same place, sit in the vehicles and see how much legroom there

is."

The Feb. 7-10 event, sponsored by The Blade at the SeaGate Convention Centre, will feature more than 20 dealers and nearly 200 models.

Attendees can take a few of the cars out on the road. Fiat Chrysler Automobiles is offering a spin around downtown Toledo in vehicles from Chrysler, Dodge, Jeep, RAM, and Fiat.

This year, Northwest Ohio Toyota dealers are offering the chance to win a two-year lease on a 2019 Toyota Corolla Hatchback.

There are kids' activities, like face painting and balloon art, a photo scavenger hunt, and selfie contest.

"The time of year we do this is great because there's not a lot to do," said Tim Koehman of Lexus of Toledo. "It gives people a chance to get up close and personal with the products. It's in downtown Toledo so everything is 15 minutes away. It's easy to park and get in."

Hours for the Toledo Auto Show: Thursday, Feb. 7, 3 to 9 p.m.; Friday, Feb. 8, noon to 9 p.m.; Saturday, Feb. 9, 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Sunday, Feb. 10, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tickets for adults are \$8 at the box office and \$6 online (children under 9 are free). Tickets for the charity preview gala are \$250 and may be purchased online at toledoautoshow.org. The SeaGate Centre is at 401 Jefferson Ave.



General Manager Jason Perry with the Mercedes Benz GLC300 4Matic at Vin Devers Autohaus of Sylvania in Sylvania. The Blade/Rebecca Benson

Is the Toyota Highlander Hybrid worth the extra money?

BY ROBERT DUFFER

CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Looking for the most fuel-efficient three-row crossover with all-wheel drive? Chances are you've zeroed in on the Toyota Highlander Hybrid. Not much has changed for the 2019 Highlander Hybrid except the market. Automakers are rolling out more fuel-efficient crossovers by the day, it seems, with plug-in hybrids and full battery-electric vehicles planned for the immediate future.

As one of only a few hybrid three-row crossovers, the 2019 Toyota Highlander Hybrid is worth revisiting since our last write-up for model year 2015. Is it worth the upcharge, and how does this aging model stand up to the new competition? And, does it pay to be patient until the redesigned 2020 model drops this year?

The 306-horsepower V-6 with an electric continuously variable transmission comes standard in four trims. We tested the Limited, second only to Limited Platinum (\$3,520 more). Motors on the front and rear axle provide AWD capability.

Toyota Safety Sense, the suite of advanced driver assist-

tance systems including adaptive cruise, automatic high beams, lane departure alert and more are standard on all Toyota models. Other than that, the technology in the second-generation Highlander Hybrid feels old. But old can also feel familiar. There are no great surprises or steep learning curves, the infotainment system is functional, the control layout sensible enough. It has a smooth and quiet power delivery and offers plenty of room for a family of six. The lack of power folding seats or automatically collapsible headrests at this price point seemed cheap.

It is \$1,620 more expensive than the gas-only Highlander in Limited trim. It gets 28 mpg combined versus the 22 mpg combined in the gas-only version.

Based on EPA estimates of 15,000 miles driven annually at current gas prices, the annual fuel cost is \$1,250 for the Hybrid and \$1,600 for the gas model. Hybrid owners will recoup their extra costs within five years of ownership. But that is based on 55 percent of city driving. The Hybrid is at its most efficient in around-town driving, getting 9 miles to the

gallon more than the gas version. With city-only driving, the upcharge is recouped in three years of gas savings at \$550/year (annual fuel cost increases to \$1,800 in the gas version). But are you really driving 15,000 miles around town? For some parents, it sure feels like it.

By year four of ownership, the Hybrid owner is winning. Then there's the added bonus of having a cleaner, greener conscious and showing the drivers of tomorrow that you give a leaf. Let the economists put a cost on that. Seriously, though.

Yet we averaged a meager 24 mpg at 33 mph in the deepest depths of winter.

So, yes, in most cases, the Hybrid is worth the upcharge over the gas version of the Highlander and other fuel-efficient three-rows such as the Mazda CX-9 and Kia Sorento. Mitsubishi Outlander PHEV doesn't come with a third row, so that raises the question everyone is asking, from regulators to automakers: How much green do you want to spend on being green?

The lovely Volvo XC90 plug-in hybrid starts at \$67,000, nearly 50 percent more than the Highlander Hybrid. All the



2019 Toyota Highlander Hybrid.

luxury makes are launching plug-in or full battery electric crossovers in the next year or two, so maybe they think we have money to ... compost.

What about the excellent Chrysler Pacifica plug-in Hybrid? I can hear the eye rolls from here. You hate the styling, I get it, but sliding doors and wide spaces make the minivan the most practical family car around. Pacifica gets 29 mpg combined, too, without factoring in the 32-mile electric range. That would suffice the vast majority of family errands, we

expect, so there would be no gas charge annually except for the road trip fueled by all the money you saved on gas!

But it's not a crossover. Now I'm the one rolling my eyes.

At \$52,800 and 26 mpg combined, the excellent Acura MDX Sport Hybrid is the nearest competitor. It's fresher, more refined and more powerful, but it's also more expensive and less efficient.

More mainstream automakers are rolling out three-row hybrid crossovers. The 2020 Ford Explorer will come as a

hybrid, though fuel economy numbers won't be released until closer to the spring release date. The police version of the new 2020 Explorer Hybrid gets 24 mpg combined.

Even if the Explorer Hybrid is in the range of 24 to 26 mpg, the Highlander Hybrid is better. In this sense, the Highlander Hybrid is ahead of the game. It might be the only sense in which this is true, but for the fuel-conscious, family-hauling, minivan-hating car shopper, it is the sense that is most important.

Cars are the Stars gala benefits area nonprofit organizations

BY NICKI GORNY

In their Cars are the Stars Charity Preview Gala, local auto dealers expect to more than round out an estimated \$1.99 million raised for local children's charities to date.

Cars are the Stars is slated for Feb. 6, a charitable-minded kickoff to the auto show that opens its doors to the public Feb. 7-10 at the SeaGate Convention Centre. It is put on annually by Auto Dealers United for Kids, the nonprofit arm of the Toledo Auto Dealers Association, and has in the past raised upward of \$100,000 for the collective benefit of several nonprofits.

This year's beneficiaries are the Catholic Club, Children's Rights Collaborative of Northwest Ohio, Connecting Kids to Meals, Safe Kids Greater Toledo and Camp Catch-A-



Rainbow, a program of YMCA Storer Camps. These are in addition to Make-A-Wish Foundation and Owens Community College, by way of a scholarship, which organizers said benefit each year.

"We got together and said, 'How can the auto dealers give back to the community?'" said Executive Director Pat Stark,

who's been involved in Auto Dealers United for Kids since it organized in 2003 and held its first preview gala in 2004.

"Toledo has a big automotive footprint," he continued. "How can we leverage that?"

Andrea Dunn Musselman of Dunn Chevrolet Buick is this year's committee chairman. She said the funds raised by dealers, vendors, and others at the gala can make a real impact.

"It's not small amounts that we give out," she said. "It's \$12,000, \$15,000."

That impact is certainly felt at Camp Catch-A-Rainbow, said Becky Spencer, vice president of camping for YMCA of Greater Toledo. The program serves campers who are being treated for cancer or who are in remission, at no cost to their families, at the Storer Camps

facility in Jackson, Mich.

"The families are pretty stretched financially," Ms. Spencer said. "A program like this being offered for free makes a big difference."

This year's other beneficiaries are:

- The Catholic Club, a nonprofit, educational center that provides a variety of services to children and families, including educational childcare and enrichment opportunities.

- The Children's Rights Collaborative of Northwest Ohio, which provides a safe and supervised environment for visitation and exchanges between parents and children.

- Connecting Kids To Meals, which provides hot and healthy meals at no cost to children in low-income and underserved areas of the community.



- Safe Kids Greater Toledo, a community coalition led by ProMedica Toledo Children's Hospital and aimed at keeping children safe from accidental injuries

Each year sees a different

slate of beneficiaries, with area nonprofits invited to apply for consideration through Auto Dealers United for Kids. The nonprofit has contributed to 57 different children's charities since its first gala.

Jeep pulls industry along with sales up 17.5 percent in 2018

BY JON CHAVEZ

BLADE BUSINESS WRITER

Jeeps have a reputation for being able to tow heavy loads, but who knew they could pull the U.S. auto industry through a slowdown.

While nearly every other major automaker struggled in 2018, Fiat Chrysler Automobiles' Jeep brand sold well enough to keep the slumping domestic industry's head above water.

For the year, total U.S. car and light-truck sales totaled 17.3 million, a 0.6 percent increase or about 96,000 more vehicles sold in 2018 than in 2017.

Sales of Jeeps, the No. 6 auto brand, increased 17.5 percent last year, or 145,000 vehicles.

Leading the way was the Toledo-made Jeep Wrangler with sales of 240,000 vehicles, up 26 percent over 2017 when Wrangler sales totaled 191,000.

Overall, with Jeep Cherokee sales up 41 percent and Jeep Compass sales up 106 percent, the Jeep brand sales increased by 145,000 vehicles over 2017.

"Jeep was huge," Michelle Krebs, an analyst with Auto-trader.com, said. "It was one of the few winners."

"Fiat Chrysler, in general, was a winner as a result. I think they gained a full percentage in market share, which may not sound like a lot but is a huge deal," she said. "And it was mostly on the back of Jeep and the Wrangler obviously was a lot of that."

Driven by Jeep sales, sales by FCA as a whole jumped 8.4 percent. Nearly all other major automakers saw their sales decline with the exception of Subaru, which rose 4.9 percent, and Volkswagen, which rose 2 percent.

General Motors declined 1.6 percent, Ford Motor Co. 3.5 percent, Toyota Motor N.A. 0.3 percent, Honda 2.2 percent, and Nissan Group 6.3 percent.

However, the declines mostly reflected a slumping car market, which fell 12 percent in 2018. Total U.S. car sales dropped by 764,000 vehicles



The 2020 Jeep® Gladiator Rubicon. The first media day of the 2019 North American Auto Show in Detroit, Michigan on January 14, 2019. The Blade/Jetta Fraser

to 5.36 million.

Conversely, sales of U.S. light trucks — which includes pickups, SUVs, and crossovers — gained 8 percent, or about 860,000 vehicles, posing a dilemma for some automakers going forward.

"The SUV market, in general, is strong. This past year in August we saw for the first time, cars drop below 30 percent as an overall share of the market," Ms. Krebs said. "From September on, that traditional car sales fell below the 30 percent market share."

Light trucks accounted for 68 percent of industry sales in the first several weeks of August, which was a record level for the month and marked the 26th straight month that truck volume had topped 60 percent of the overall market, according to J.D. Power and Associates.

"Cars, they're falling. Chrysler made a smart decision a few years ago to drop out of the traditional car market," Ms. Krebs said.

Jeep Wrangler had a consecutive sales streak of five

months with over 20,000 vehicles sold last year. That streak was broken in September.

In about three months, Jeep plans to launch its new Gladiator pickup truck — the first Jeep pickup since 1992 — which is expected to boost the brand's sales even higher. Test versions of the Gladiator currently are being produced at FCA's Toledo Assembly Complex, where the full production model is to be made.

The Gladiator closely resembles the Wrangler in that it has removable doors and top and

a fold-down windshield. But it also has a 5-foot cargo bed that can haul up to 1,600 pounds.

It debuted last year at the Los Angeles auto show but also was a darling this month at the North American International Auto Show in Detroit.

"I think the Jeep Gladiator was one of the hits of the (Detroit) show. It was a big attention grabber. It was so unique. There's nothing like it and nothing like Jeep," Ms. Krebs said.

But how long Jeep can continue its hot streak and continue to buoy the industry as

a whole is anyone's guess, she added.

SUVs and crossovers are hot now but will that continue when autonomous vehicles start becoming more prevalent? "I remember when minivans were the big thing and that faded," Ms. Krebs said.

"And we are seeing a lot more competition in the SUV segment. They were all over the (Detroit) auto show. Everybody has them," she said. "Lately they're discounting them more and inventories are rising."



Jeep Wranglers roll off the finish line at the Toledo North Assembly Plant in Toledo. The Blade/Lori King



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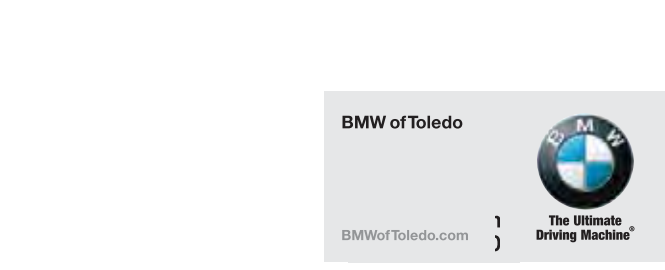
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Regulators OK a 'follow you like a pet' feature in Tesla cars

By **RUSS MITCHELL**

LOS ANGELES TIMES

For years, Tesla Chief Executive Elon Musk has been promising science-fiction-sounding remote control software for Tesla cars.

He's promised a mobile app to signal a car to drive itself around a parking lot, find a spot and park, checking signs to make sure the spot is legal.

In 2016, he told reporters that "within two years, you'll be able to summon your car from across the country" — alerting a car parked in New York to drive itself and meet the owner in Los Angeles.

None of this has happened yet.

But Mr. Musk recently promised an "advanced summon" feature is "almost ready to roll out."

A basic summon option already lets Model S and X Teslas park themselves remotely on a driver's command.

With the new advanced summon, to be available to any Model S, X and 3 manufactured over the last two years, a person with a smartphone can tell a Tesla to "drive to your phone location & follow you like a pet," Mr. Musk wrote on Twitter in October.

"You'll be able to drive it from our phone remotely like a big [remote control] car if in line of sight."

Mr. Musk said "regulators just approved" the feature, though he didn't say which regulators.

Such software does not require regulatory approval by the U.S. government under current federal law. He may have been talking about Europe, China, or a U.S. state.

Tesla did not return emails and phone calls requesting clarification.



Elon Musk, CEO of Tesla Motors Inc., introduces the Model X car at the company's headquarters. Musk said the Model X sets a new bar for automotive engineering, with unique features like rear falcon-wing doors, which open upward, and a driver's door that opens on approach and closes itself when the driver is inside. (AP Photo/Marcio Jose Sanchez)

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Long road trip shows value of built-in navigation, winter tires, and more

ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOS ANGELES — You don't complete a 7,100-mile, 48-state road trip without learning a few things, especially if you go in the grips of winter.

A group of Edmunds editors made such a journey in December, in just seven days.

Along the way, they encountered amazing vistas, dark and lonely roads, and plenty of rain, subfreezing temperatures and snow.

Here are four takeaways that stood out above the rest.

TORQUE-VECTORING ALL-WHEEL DRIVE EXCELS IN SNOW

Four-wheel drive (4WD) and all-wheel drive (AWD) are not interchangeable terms.

The 4WD systems found on most pickups are meant to be engaged after the vehicle has left the road.

These systems lack something called a center differential, so binding and slippage will occur while turning if you use 4WD on pavement.

It's not an issue on dirt and snow; such surfaces shift to alleviate the binding.

AWD systems can operate on pavement because they have a center differential or a similar mechanism.

The resulting lack of binding makes them better able to cope with rain, snow, and ice because tires maintain more consistent contact with the surface.

More advanced AWD systems have an active center differential that varies the front-to-rear distribution of the engine's power to reduce tire slippage and improve stability during acceleration.

Our clear favorite is a subgenre called torque-vectoring AWD.

Such systems also redistribute power side to side across the rear axle, which helps to reduce slippage and improve stability on iffy surfaces during sharper turns and accident-avoidance maneuvers.

The Adventure trim level of the 2019 Toyota RAV4 we tested on this trip has such a system, and it gave us a lot of confidence.

Various brands offer torque-vectoring AWD systems, but the names differ. Honda calls its system Super Handling AWD (SH-AWD), for instance.

WINTER TIRES OFFER CLEAR BENEFITS



This Dec. 6, 2018, photo provided by Edmunds shows the 2019 Toyota RAV4 entering Tennessee winding up the first leg of a seven-day, 7,000-mile test drive that touched all 48 contiguous states. Five three-person teams drove continuously, stopping only for gas, restrooms and quick meals. Along the way, they noted the particular value of four features for long road trips, particularly in winter: torque-vectoring all-wheel drive, winter tires, bright LED headlights and built-in navigation. (Edmunds via AP)

They're often called snow tires, but winter tires is a better name because they also provide added grip on frigid pavement even when there's no snow.

Winter tires work in two ways: Their specialized tread features numerous fine cuts known as "sipes" that give them myriad biting edges.

They also employ a specialized rubber formulation that remains grippy and pliable in subfreezing conditions.

All-season tires have a year-round mission, providing warm-weather grip and durability, not to mention quietness and fuel efficiency.

This compromise results in a modest level of winter performance that's best suited for those who see occasional light

snowfall.

In many areas, safety officials do not consider all-season tires suitable for tough conditions. They'll demand tire chains.

Winter tires are by far the better choice for those who live with real winter, particularly if hills and winding roads are involved.

Our test-drive route included more than 2,500 miles of subfreezing temperatures and numerous high mountain passes, so we fitted a set of winter tires before we reached the Northern Plains and Rocky Mountain states.

In the High Rockies, our vehicle remained confident and well-planted where others struggled.

HEADLIGHTS REALLY

MATTER

Away from cities, it's still dark out there.

We drove many roads that were completely unlit, and we often saw no other cars.

Several rural states had 80 mph interstate speed limits, but we even found narrow two-lane roads posted at 65 mph or more.

These dark rural stretches tend to host wildlife -- big leaping animals such as deer, antelope and elk.

We also drove through open grazing lands where cattle roam free, usually black-coated herds that blend in with the night.

The ability to see far ahead is critical in such conditions. But in these conditions, the only light you have is what your car

can provide.

Headlight technology has been evolving rapidly, with LED headlights generally offering the best illumination.

But there's still a lot of variation in performance, so the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety recently began testing and rating headlight performance.

DON'T WRITE OFF BUILT-IN NAVIGATION

Apple CarPlay and Android Auto let you operate your smartphone's navigation apps via a vehicle's touchscreen. But there are limitations.

You must own a smartphone with a good-size data plan. You must also be driving in an area where your specific provider offers data coverage.

Such coverage is not a given

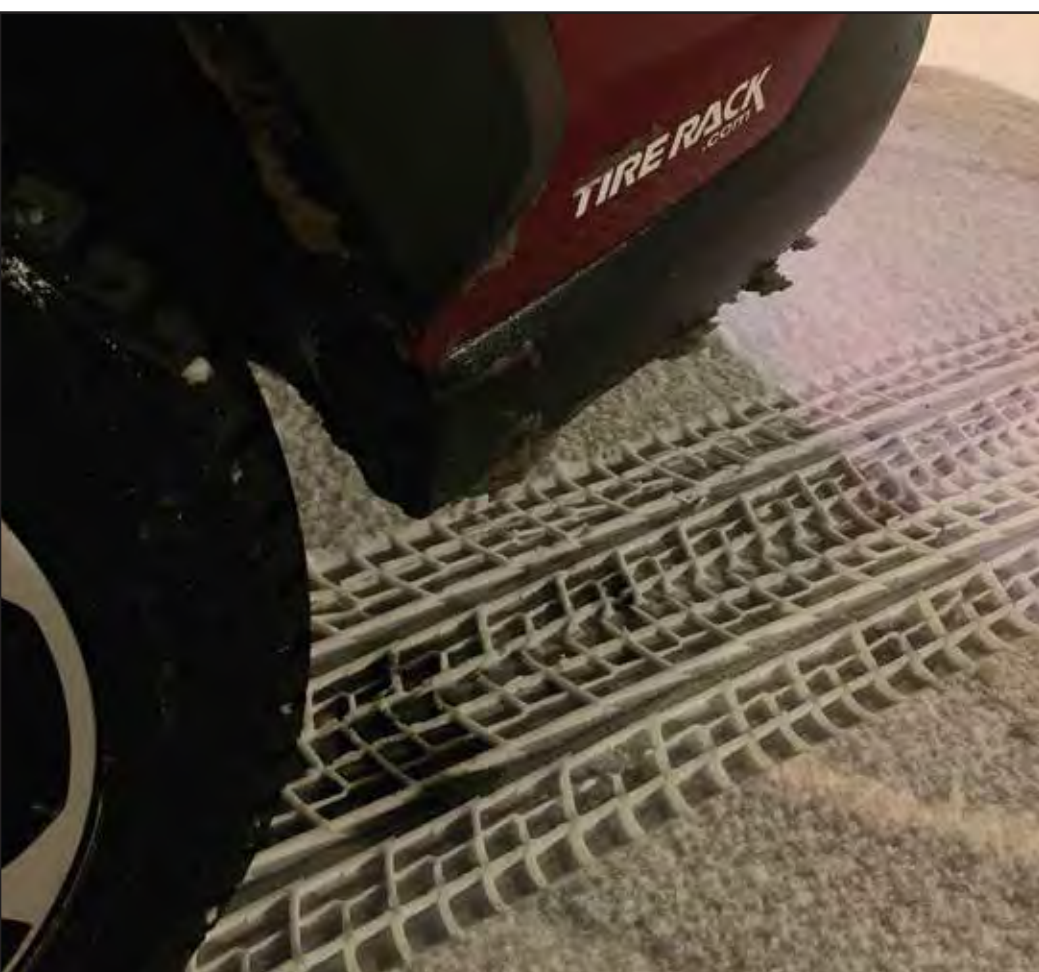
in every corner of our country, especially if you use back roads away from the interstates, as we often did.

But it's more common than that: There are several "no service" areas less than 50 miles from downtown Los Angeles.

There are workarounds, such as pre-saving routes or initiating guidance when you have service.

But only a vehicle's built-in navigation lets you see maps and establish guidance when there's no data-level cell service.

Even if you don't drive 7,100 miles in a week, safe travel in tough conditions and unfamiliar terrain is a lot easier and more enjoyable if you have the right vehicle and equipment to suit the trip.



A photo provided by Edmunds in December 2018 shows the 2019 Toyota RAV4, outfitted with winter tires, and tread marks in snow. Winter tires' specialized tread features numerous fine cuts known as "sipes" that give them myriad biting edges. Winter tires also employ a specialized rubber formulation that remains grippy and pliable in subfreezing conditions. (Edmunds via AP)



In this December 2018 photo provided by Edmunds it shows the cross-country test-drive vehicle, the 2019 Toyota RAV4, during the penultimate leg of a seven-day, 7,100-mile trip. The team encountered snow in the high mountains of Idaho and Washington but the RAV4 Edmunds tested was the Adventure trim level, equipped with torque-vectoring all-wheel drive, which redistributes power side to side across the rear axle. That helped to reduce slippage and improve stability. (Edmunds via AP)

Google's self-driving spinoff Waymo to put factory in Michigan

ASSOCIATED PRESS
 LANSING — Google's self-driving car spinoff Waymo said it will bring a factory to Michigan, creating up to 400 jobs at what it describes as the world's first plant "100 percent" dedicated to the mass production of autonomous vehicles.

The company plans to spend about \$13.6 million to retrofit a to-be-determined manufacturing facility in the Detroit area.

In exchange, it will get a state incentive grant worth up to \$8 million that was approved recently by the Michigan Strategic Fund Board.

Waymo spokesman Alexis Georgeson said the company plans to hire up to 400 people to work at the factory, including engineers, operations experts, and fleet coordinators.

She said Waymo is looking for a site and hopes to open the plant in the middle of this year.

A memo from the Michigan Economic Development Corp. says Waymo will create 100 jobs, with the potential for up to 400, and it chose Michigan despite a "high level of interest" from states in the Midwest, South, and Southwest.

The company integrates its self-driving system into vehicles it buys from automakers and is currently testing autonomous Chrysler Pacifica minivans in a preferred rider program for passengers in the Phoenix area, but with human backup drivers on board.

It plans to expand the service to the San Francisco area



In this Jan. 8, 2017, file photo a Chrysler Pacifica hybrid outfitted with Waymo's suite of sensors and radar is displayed at the North American International Auto Show in Detroit. Google's self-driving car spinoff Waymo said Tuesday it will bring a factory to Michigan, creating up to 400 jobs at what it describes as the world's first plant "100 percent" dedicated to the mass production of autonomous vehicles. (AP Photo/Paul Sancya, File)

but has not given a time frame. Waymo previously announced plans to buy 62,000 Pacificas and 20,000 I-Pace electric SUVs from Jaguar.

Waymo, which has a 20-employee facility in the Detroit suburb of Novi where it tests vehicles in snowy weather, will put the new factory in Wayne, Oakland or Macomb counties, where the auto industry dominates the econ-

omy with thousands of jobs from U.S. and foreign-based automakers as well as parts supply companies.

"As we begin to commercialize our business and vehicle supply grows, we're laying the foundation for a scalable, robust vehicle integration plan, starting in Michigan," the company said in a blog.

Bryant Walker Smith, a University of South Carolina law

professor who studies autonomous vehicles, said the announcement shows that Waymo, which was spun off from Google and is part of parent company Alphabet Inc., has plans to integrate itself into the existing auto industry.

"You can't reinvent everything. Coming to Michigan in some ways is your complete recognition of that," Mr. Smith said. "Michigan is where you go in the United States to be fully immersed in automotive culture and industry."

He said Waymo will find abundant labor supply at a

lower cost than in California, where it is now headquartered.

The announcement confirms that Waymo will use the Michigan factory to produce a large number of vehicles for ride-hailing services in many cities, Mr. Smith said.

But it did not say when it will deploy the vehicles without human backup drivers.

"This is an announcement about a facility to be, and the cars that will come from that facility one day," Mr. Smith said. "What this is is that Waymo plans to eventually

expand. They've been setting that foundation for a couple of years now."

Michigan Economic Development Corp. CEO Jeff Mason said Silicon Valley companies are increasingly interested in relocating to or expanding in the state.

He cited KLA-Tencor's plan to open a \$70 million semiconductor research-and-development center in Ann Arbor and Samsung SDI's plan to build a \$60 million-plus electric vehicle battery pack plant in Auburn Hills.

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In this March 27, 2018 file photo, the Jaguar I-Pace vehicle outfitted with Waymo's suite of sensors and radar is introduced in New York. Google's self-driving car spinoff Waymo said Tuesday it will bring a factory to Michigan, creating up to 400 jobs at what it describes as the world's first plant "100 percent" dedicated to the mass production of autonomous vehicles. (AP Photo/Mark Lennihan, File)

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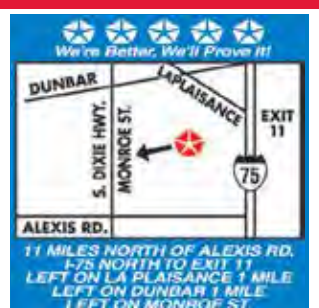


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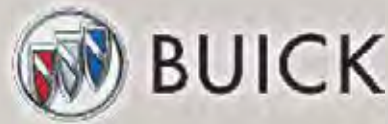
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Seeking thrifty ways to cut pollution, Rotterdam links up with hybrid owners

REUTERS
 ROTTERDAM, Netherlands — As Daan Hosli's hybrid BMW glides into downtown Rotterdam, it passes a virtual boundary into the city's "electric-only zone" and his mobile phone trills out a reminder to switch off his combustion engine and drive on battery power.

Mr. Hosli is taking part in Electric City Drive, one in a series of projects planned by the city of Rotterdam and BMW looking to cut greenhouse gas emissions and reduce traffic pollution — without breaking the bank.

"The first results look promising," said Arno Bonte, the city's vice mayor, who oversees energy policies. "I hope we can extend this project as soon as possible, also to owners of cars by other brands."

Participants have a smartphone app, developed by BMW, which monitors their engine usage and reminds them to switch, voluntarily, to electric driving when they hit a geo-fence.

Costs to the city, Mr. Bonte said, are nil.

Initial results show participants are willing to use battery power exclusively while in the zone about 90 percent of the

time.

The Netherlands is an outlier in Europe with relatively more hybrids than electric vehicles, 100,000 versus 40,000 — together still just a small fraction of the 8.1 million vehicles on the country's roads.

But "if you really want to make a difference now, you have to look at hybrids," said BMW Netherlands CEO Stefanie Wurst.

That is because, with European cities struggling to meet dual goals of improving air quality and reducing greenhouse gas emissions from cars by 30 percent by 2030, they need practical ways of making

progress quickly, rather than holding out for a distant — and costly — entirely electric car future.

It's not proving easy.

German cities are angering diesel car owners by banning high-polluting vehicles from some of their streets, while French plans for a fossil fuel surcharge set off the "yellow vests" street protests.

Even in Norway, which leads the world in electric car adoption, Oslo is introducing fees for charging and looking at ways to avoid expensive grid upgrades.

"Positive stimulation is always better than negative sanctions," Ms. Wurst said.

She said Rotterdam program participants had responded well to small rewards, such as a discount pass

for local attractions, as well as from the simple reminder to switch.

A financial incentive to run hybrids on electricity is theoretically built in, as electricity is cheaper than petrol per kilometer traveled.

Vice Mayor Bonte said Rotterdam views hybrids as a bridge to mass adoption of electric vehicles sometime in the mid 2020s as prices fall and charging infrastructure improves.

The city has granted a charging station concession to Engie, with the French company agreeing to install one public charging pole for each electric or hybrid vehicle owner that requests one — 4,000 so far, in a city of 600,000 people, though there are more in private buildings and parking garages.

But there's a long way to go. According to EV-Volumes.

com, a data provider which culls information from national registries, the number of vehicles capable of driving on electric engines across Europe grew by 33 percent in 2018, split between 181,000 plug in hybrid vehicles and 230,000 electric-only vehicles — together making up about 1.5 percent of total new car sales.

In Rotterdam, Mr. Hosli said he enjoys the challenge of trying to find charging stations and using up his electric battery as often as he can.

Statistics on his app show he uses about 4 liters of petrol per 100 kilometers of travel.

"I have to drive for work, I can't avoid that, for me this is just a fun way to do it," said the real estate developer.

"It's like a sport for me, to fill up with gas as little as possible."



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The electric pitch from Porsche: This car recharges fast

BLOOMBERG NEWS

Zero-to-60 times are short-hand for what anybody buying a Porsche is supposed to care about.

But with the all-electric Taycan due out later this year, Porsche executives are talking up a less-exhilarating metric: getting to 60 miles of charge.

Stepping into the world of electric cars is making even the most hallowed performance brands rethink how they market their vehicles.

Porsche is no exception. At peak, the Taycan will be able to add more than 60 miles of charge in four minutes, thanks to an 800-volt battery that can absorb fast-charging rates of up to 350 kilowatts.

That's quicker than Tesla owners can achieve at the company's 120-kilowatt supercharging stations, which can bring batteries to about an 80 percent charge in roughly 30 minutes.

"Getting into a car and doing 0-to-60 mph in less than three seconds — can you really differentiate yourself if you do it in 2.8 seconds, and the other can do it in 2.7?," said Klaus Zellmer, the head of Porsche Cars North America. "There are other factors that will gain importance, such as charging time."

That may sound like blasphemy to some Porsche enthusiasts.

But charging times will be a key selling point for automakers trying to coax consumers into overcoming their fear of being stranded with a dead battery.

Porsche's new four-door sedan is part of a pack of luxury

electric vehicles, along with Audi's E-Tron and Jaguar's I-Pace, that are looking to capture some of Tesla Inc.'s industry-defying magic.

Sales of EVs made up just 1.1 percent of new-car sales in the U.S. last year, according to researcher LMC Automotive, and Tesla accounted for most of that.

Charging infrastructure is a new perk for would-be buyers.

Through a partnership with Electrify America, the charging-network company borne from Volkswagen AG's diesel-emissions scandal, Taycan owners will get three years of free charging at stations that'll have a minimum of two 350 kilowatt chargers per site.

While Electrify America announced last week that it was shutting down its fast chargers to investigate a potential safety issue involving a supplier's liquid-cooled cables, Porsche said that it's confident the issue will be resolved before the launch of the Taycan later this year.

In addition to the network of 300 highway fast-charging stations that are going to be either installed or under construction by July 1, another 120 Porsche dealerships will offer fast charging by early 2020.

Building long-distance charging infrastructure may not be entirely rational, since about 90 percent of electric-vehicle charging happens at home.

That hasn't stopped automakers from touting their charging offerings.

Audi is giving away 1,000



free kilowatt hours with Electrify America for anyone buying a new E-Tron.

General Motors Co.'s Chevrolet Bolt EV comes with a card for ChargePoint stations, though the driver has to foot the bill.

Tesla is also moving toward a pay-for-use model after previously offering 400 kilowatt hours a year of free fast charging on its proprietary network.

CEO Elon Musk has promised upgrades to its Supercharger network early this year.

This is a new role for automakers who have no real interest in today's network of gas stations that provide fuel

for millions of internal combustion cars.

"They really don't care where you charge, but they do care that you feel comfortable that you know you can charge so you'll buy the car," said Brett Smith, director of propulsion technology and energy infrastructure at the non-profit Center for Automotive Research. "For that to happen, the car companies have to get involved."

Having long-distance charging is even less relevant for Porsche owners, Mr. Zellmer said, because most will own multiple cars and could take another out of the garage if they're worried about needing to plug in.

Still, he said, Porsche has to do it to "comfort" potential buyers.

Driven by regulatory mandates and a profound sense of existential anxiety over Tesla's market capitalization, automakers are pouring billions into the battery-powered cars.

Porsche will spend \$6.8 billion by 2022 on electrification and has said more than half its line up will have a plug by 2025.

Porsche hasn't disclosed pricing for the Taycan, but it's clearly gunning for the Tesla Model S, which starts at \$94,000.

Teslas will no longer be eligible for federal tax credits after this year, whereas

Porsche has a long way to go before worrying about the cap of 200,000 electric-vehicle sales that triggers a ratcheting down of the incentive.

The company sold 57,202 vehicles in 2018.

As for old-fashioned specs, the Taycan is expected to have a total system output of more than 600 horsepower and will accelerate to 62 mph in faster than 3.5 seconds.

It can go about 310 miles before it runs out of juice, a bit short of the 335-mile range for the base Model S.

Porsche is feeling confident, boosting global production capacity for the Taycan to 40,000 from an original 20,000 units.

The company says it's responding to strong demand.

Mr. Zellmer won't say how many people in the U.S. have coughed up the \$2,500 refundable deposit for the Taycan, but he happily mentions that two-thirds aren't existing Porsche owners.

Among those, he says Tesla is the most common brand.

Marc Cohen, who owns a Porsche dealership in Towson, Md., says he has 25 or 30 names on his waiting list.

They're a mix of Porsche owners and general sports-car enthusiasts, rather than EV evangelists hoping to save the planet.

"None of the ones I know are Tesla owners or actual EV kind of people," he said. "These people are luxury owners that understand that it's the next wave of tech and what's coming, so they're just getting in line."



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Fuel efficiency standards to be modified to include electric vehicles, plug-in hybrids

JAPAN NEWS

The government intends to modify the fuel efficiency standards so that electric vehicles and plug-in hybrids will also be subject to tax assessments, the Yomiuri Shimbun has learned.

It hopes that by establishing environmental standards that such models should meet, carmakers will be motivated to develop more EVs and other environmentally friendly vehicles, sources said.

The move will likely affect how car taxes are calculated. For this reason, automakers are expected to compete fiercely to develop new models that can meet the envisaged criteria.

The government set the current standards to urge automakers to achieve fuel efficiency goals, as part of measures against global warming. They took effect in fiscal 2011 and are known as the "fiscal 2020 standards" because the aim is to achieve them by that fiscal year.

Under the current standards, mainly gasoline-powered vehicles and hybrid models are subject to reduced taxes. In the case of a 1.5-ton gasoline-powered car, it must drive at least 17.6 kilometers on a liter of gasoline to meet the standards. Though many vehicles already meet the criteria, the government plans to set higher fuel efficiency levels for gasoline-powered vehicles and other models, sources said.

The new standards are expected to be compiled as early as this spring after discussions

by expert panels of the Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism Ministry and the Economy, Trade and Industry Ministry.

The target year for achieving the new standards will likely fall sometime from fiscal 2027 to fiscal 2030, according to sources.

In the case of EVs, the government will set the environmental standards based on figures such as one calculated by multiplying the electric power consumption rate - the amount of electricity required to drive one kilometer - with a certain coefficient to convert the rate into an equivalent amount of gasoline.

EVs and PHVs are being included in the new standards because they are expected to be used widely in the future.

Currently, about 10 EV and about 20 PHV models are sold nationwide. New car sales of EVs and PHVs in fiscal 2017 were about 60,000 units. The figure accounts for only about 1 percent of new car sales, but is double the amount sold in fiscal 2016.

Automakers will be required to sell a certain number of vehicles that meet the new standards by a predetermined fiscal year.

Improving the electric power consumption rate will require reducing the weight of vehicle bodies and improving batteries.

The government, for its part, hopes to spur technological development at carmakers by calling for high standards of environmental performance, according to the sources.



(AP Photo/Shizuo Kambayashi)

Actress Satomi Ishihara poses with a Toyota Prius PHV during a press conference rolling out the Prius PHV plug-in hybrid in Tokyo. Toyota revamped its plug-in hybrid with a longer cruise range and quicker charging, including from a regular home plug.

The fuel efficiency standards are also used in deciding the amount of taxes that users pay for their cars. They pay less when their cars have better fuel efficiency. This applies to such tax systems as the eco-car tax break system, which reduces the automobile weight tax, and the envi-

ronmental performance tax system, which will be imposed on vehicle purchases from October.

Under the eco-car tax breaks and environmental performance tax system, all the EV and PHV models are exempt from taxes.

Under the new standards,

such models will be required to meet even higher environmental criteria. EV and PHV models will likely be strictly divided by level of performance when the new standards are applied to determine tax reduction rates.

Meanwhile, it is also possible that the new fuel efficiency

standards will be applied to the automobile tax, the rate of which changes depending on the amount of engine displacement. Currently, zero-exhaust EVs are in the same category as vehicles classified as emitting the lowest amount of exhaust.

Ranking fuel-efficient all-wheel drives

ASSOCIATED PRESS

As ice and snow envelop many of America's roads this winter, all-wheel-drive vehicles become more desirable than their two-wheel-drive counterparts. And all-wheel drive's extra traction makes it easier to accelerate, especially on icy hills.

However, traditional downsides to all-wheel drive include added cost and complexity, and reduced fuel economy.

Some new 2019 vehicles offer shoppers a way to get both all-wheel drive and great fuel economy. We've highlighted a range of vehicles that get an EPA-estimated 30 mpg or higher in combined city/highway driving, with the mileage leaders topping the lists. Prices are the starting manufacturer's suggested retail price, including destination fee.

The Toyota Prius has been the fuel-sipping leader for almost two decades, but its front-wheel-drive layout limited its appeal in wet or icy regions. That changes with the new 2019 Prius AWD-e, which arrives at dealerships early this year. With a starting MSRP of \$27,310, it gains an electric motor that drives the rear wheels and provides extra traction from a standstill. The Prius AWD-e gets an impressive 50 mpg, too.

The similarly priced 2019 Toyota RAV4 Hybrid (\$28,865) is redesigned for 2019 and arrives at dealerships in the spring. It returns an EPA-estimated 39 mpg combined, which is excellent for a five-passenger crossover SUV. Considering the RAV4 is America's best-selling non-pickup, we expect this new hybrid version to help

keep demand high.

Subaru is well-known for its all-wheel-drive vehicles, and the new 2019 Crosstrek Hybrid (\$35,970) is the company's most efficient vehicle. It's estimated to return 35 mpg combined. It's also a plug-in hybrid, which means you can drive it on electric-only power for a distance of 17 miles or so.

Nissan's 2019 Rogue Hybrid crossover SUV is another option that's versatile and fuel-efficient. It isn't terribly fast but gets a favorable 33 mpg combined. It starts at \$29,995 and benefits from a useful amount of interior space and plenty of standard safety features.

Diesel has gotten a bad rep-

utation in recent years, but it remains an efficient alternative to gasoline. The 2019 Chevrolet Equinox can be ordered with an optional turbocharged diesel engine. With it, the all-wheel-drive Equinox starts at \$32,195 and achieves a 32 mpg estimate. The related 2019 GMC Terrain, which can be had with the same engine

and AWD, costs \$34,595.

The Nissan Altima has been redesigned for 2019, and it can be equipped with all-wheel drive for the first time. This \$25,995 sedan sneaks onto our list with its 30 mpg EPA estimate. Nissan only offers all-wheel drive with the Altima's less powerful base engine, but the rest of the new Altima is

appealing thanks to comfortable seating and sharp looks.

Subaru makes another appearance on our list with its affordable Impreza. It's available as a sedan (\$19,480) or hatchback (\$19,980) and has EPA estimates that range from 30 mpg to 32 mpg combined. As with most other Subaru, all-wheel drive comes standard. We also like the Impreza's roomy interior and cargo area.

Among luxury-branded vehicles, diesel continues to reap rewards. Diesel versions of the 2019 Jaguar XF (\$55,460) and 2019 Jaguar XE (\$42,020) sedans return 34 mpg combined. With gobs of torque at their disposal, these sedans will deliver more performance than you'd expect.

Lexus is a pioneer for luxury hybrid SUVs, and its all-new entry, the subcompact UX 250h (\$35,025), is expected to get 39 mpg combined. Meanwhile, the latest RX 450h (\$47,020) remains an excellent choice for an all-wheel-drive SUV with high fuel economy. It gets a 30 mpg estimate. Lexus also offers the smaller 2019 NX 300h (\$39,860), which gets 31 mpg.

Of course, there are ways not to burn any gas at all. Luxury automakers are coming out with an array of new electric vehicles, and many of them are all-wheel-drive. These include the entire Tesla lineup (Model 3, Model S and Model X) and the Jaguar I-Pace, all of which are on sale now. Just as the weather begins to warm, the Audi e-Tron SUV will begin arriving in showrooms. The Mercedes-Benz EQC SUV follows in winter 2020.

This story was provided to the Associated Press by the automotive website Edmunds.



Ford unveils its most powerful Mustang yet

CNN

Ford Motor Co. has unveiled the most powerful factory-produced Mustang the company has ever made. The new Shelby GT500 has a supercharged V8 engine that will produce more than 700 horsepower.

More testing and validation needs to be done before an exact horsepower figure can be announced, the company said at the North American International Auto Show in Detroit last month. What we do know is that it will have more power than the \$450,000 Ford GT supercar, which has 647 horsepower, and it will be capable of going from zero to 60 miles an hour in a little over three seconds.

Power from the car's 5.2-liter aluminum engine will go through a seven-speed dual-clutch automatic transmis-

sion similar to the type used in the Ford GT. Dual-clutch transmissions provide a more direct transfer of power to the wheels than ordinary automatic transmissions and can shift gears much more quickly.

There's no manual transmission offered in this car, said Jim Owens, Ford Performance marketing manager, because the automatic can get much more performance from the engine than any human shifting gears could. The transmission was engineered specifically for this car.

The first Shelby GT500 appeared in 1967. That car had half the horsepower of the new model. The original Shelby GT500s are considered among the most desirable American performance cars in the world. A 1967 Shelby GT500 Super Snake recently sold at a

Mecum classic car auction in Florida for \$2.2 million.

The most recent Ford-produced Shelby GT500 before this one, which went out of production in 2015, produced 662 horsepower from a 5.8-liter V8 engine.

Ford has a complicated but fruitful relationship with the Las Vegas-based Shelby American company. Shelby Mustangs were originally made by Shelby using Mustangs supplied by Ford as a starting point. Shelby still does these sort of performance conversions. In fact, there are already Shelby Mustangs, such as the Shelby-produced Super Snake, with over 700 horsepower. This one, though, will be the most powerful ever produced by Ford Motor Co. itself.



Ford Motor Company's Executive Vice President and president, Global Markets, Jim Farley introduces the 2020 Ford Mustang Shelby GT500, Monday, Jan. 14, 2019, at the North American International Auto Show in Detroit. (AP Photo/Carlos Osorio)

Nissan gives a glimpse of future electric cars

CNN

Nissan makes the best-selling electric car in the world to date. Over 380,000 Nissan Leafs have been sold, and that model is now in its second generation.

But the Leaf remains Nissan's only widely available electric car.

Nissan has announced plans for eight new electric models by 2022. The automaker later unveiled the Nissan IMs concept car, which, according to Nissan North America Chairman Denis LeVot, offered a look at what Nissan plans beyond 2022.

Nissan describes the IMs, which debuted at the North American International Auto Show in Detroit last month, as an "elevated sports sedan." It has plenty of concept car clichés — like structurally challenging center-opening doors, an impractical rectangular steering wheel, and seats that look like office chairs — features that will almost certainly not appear on any production model. While the car gives a sense of what designers are thinking, Nissan did not say that this concept presaged any specific new model.

The IMs is essentially a crossover SUV with a car shape. It doesn't have a grill, since one isn't needed on an electric car. Narrow headlights recreate Nissan's signature V-shaped grill outline,

but with the flat metal between them.

"We looked at Nissan's heritage and realized that some of our most successful models, such as the first-generation Murano and our Z cars, all had very simple silhouettes," said Alfonso Albaisa, Nissan's senior vice president for design.

A curved line of gold-colored aluminum along the edge of the roof was suggested by the arc of moonlight visible during a lunar eclipse, according to Nissan.

With concept cars, capabilities and specifications often exist only in a press release, but they can help illustrate what designers and engineers are working toward. As described by Nissan, the IMs has two electric motors producing a total of 483 horsepower and fully autonomous driving capabilities.

It has what Nissan calls 2+1+2 seating. The numerical name plays off of the term "2+2 seating" used to describe the interior layout of cars like the Porsche 911 with two adult-sized seats up front and two child-sized seats in the back. The IMs has two full-sized seats up front and another in the center behind



them. There are also two slim folding back seats — one on each side — allowing the car to seat five, if needed.

When the IMs is running in "autonomous mode" the steering wheel retracts into the dashboard and the front seats rotate toward one another, allowing the occupants to converse more naturally.

Nissan says the concept has a 3D augmented reality system it calls Invisible-to-Visible. It relies on a system of sensors and cameras to detect things the driver might not be able to see, such as cars around corners or information about traffic up ahead. Drivers can also have a human-like 3D avatar give them directions, offer advice, or just talk. The avatar can be made to look like a family member or friend for company.

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Boeing flying car lifts off in race to revolutionize travel, delivery services



REUTERS

SEATTLE — Boeing Co. said its flying car prototype hovered briefly in the air during a recent inaugural test flight, a small but significant step as the world's largest plane maker prepares to revolutionize urban transportation and parcel delivery services.

Boeing is competing with Airbus and numerous other firms to introduce small

self-flying vehicles capable of vertical takeoff and landing.

The investments, fueled by leaps in autonomous technology as much as frustration with road congestion, could change the face of the aerospace industry within the next decade.

Boeing's 30-foot-long vehicle — part helicopter, part drone, and part fixed-wing plane — lifted a few feet off the

ground and made a soft landing after less than a minute of being airborne at an airport in Manassas, Va., Boeing said.

Future flights will test forward, wing-borne flight.

"This is what revolution looks like, and it's because of autonomy," said John Langford, president and chief executive officer of Boeing subsidiary Aurora Flight Sciences. Major hurdles to Boeing's

vision of "low-stress" mobility — as it is called in the company's marketing materials — include sorting out numerous critical safety and regulatory issues to meld traditional roadway traffic with fleets of flying cars.

Boeing is working with start-up SparkCognition Inc and the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration to develop a traffic-management system

for three-dimensional highways, as well as the regulatory framework that will allow waves of autonomous vehicles to zip safely around buildings, the company has said.

Boeing bought Manassas-based Aurora Flight Sciences last year to speed development of a fleet of autonomous air vehicles.

With Aurora, Boeing is also working on Uber Technol-

ogies' UberAIR service for flights that are planned to be available for order via smartphones around 2023.

Boeing is looking to achieve a range of 50 miles with two flying car variants capable of carrying two and four passengers each. Tests are planned for later this year on a package-hauling version that can lift up to 500 pounds.

Competitors range from Airbus, which says it has already conducted numerous flying vehicle test flights, to Volocopter, which has tested drone taxis that resemble a small helicopter powered by 18 rotors, and AeroMobil, with a stretch-limousine concept that can turn into a fixed-wing aircraft.

Vertical Aerospace, which completed a flight test last year, aims to offer short inter-city flights in the coming years with a piloted aircraft capable of carrying multiple passengers.

"The future of mobility — moving goods, moving cargo — moving people — that future is happening now and it's going to accelerate over the next five years and ramp up even more beyond that," Dennis Muilenburg, Boeing's president, chairman and CEO, told a panel at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland.



(AP Photo/Claude Paris)

AeroMobil display their latest prototype of a flying car, in Monaco. The light frame plane whose wings can fold back, like an insect is boosted by a rear propeller.



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