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This year's featured car is Mike and Hope Mundwiler's recently restored 1967 Ford Fairlane XL Convertible



'67 Fairlane becomes wedding present



PHOTOS BY ROXIE MURPHY

BY ROXIE MURPHY
REPUBLICAN STAFF WRITER
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If anyone has been to Roy Belloir's shop recently, they may have noticed the absence of Mike and Hope Mundwiller's 1967 Ford Fairlane convertible.

The nearly-finished Fairlane restoration project has been 28 years in the making.

"There really isn't anything on this car that hasn't been redone," Mike began. "I bought this car for my wife as wedding present in 1990. I'm not making that up either."

When Mike first met Hope, she drove a white Fairlane. He said the frame on the first car was rusted. They sold it when they were in college.

"About a month before we got married, we heard about this car for sale up in Warrensburg. We were attending school in Clinton, Mo., so we went to look at it," Mike said.

Back then the car was a midnight blue with midnight blue interior. He acted like he wasn't interested, but he knew Hope wanted it.

"I don't remember how I sprung it on her, but she got it before we got married," Mike remembers.

The first summer after they were married, the couple drove the Fairlane

See **Fairlane**, Page 3B

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for close to three months. Then parked it in a barn, and left for law school.

“When we got back from law school, I started it up for her one day and it was smoking real bad,” Mike said.

He didn’t know why it was smoking or what was wrong with it, so they parked it again.

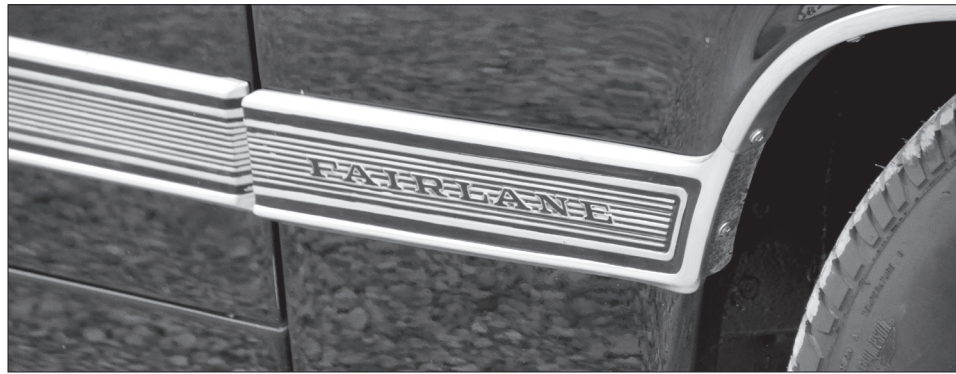
“We had other things going on at that time,” Mike remembers. The car sat for another 15 years. Then in 2008, the couple had some time, money and inclination.

“In ’08, I took it back out of the shed, took it apart and had the motor redone,” Mike recalls. “We had it over in Belle at Bernie Kolb’s, having all the bodywork done and all the paint,” Mike said.

The couple debated a long time about what color to paint the car.

“We knew we did not want the blue,” he said. “I have never seen a black one like this; and we have always wanted a car with white interior and never had one. That checked that box.”

They sent the interior to be redone, and didn’t get it back for almost three years. Mike said they weren’t in a hurry though.



The seat covers came back in an antique white upholstery. Eventually, they had Paul Brenson, a local painter, match the once midnight blue trimmings inside the car to the new black and white.

“Paul Brenson did the inside paint, doors, dash and steering wheel.

“He’s very particular,” Roy said. “He loves working on older cars, and will come to you to do the car.”

Once the paint was done, the project stalled out for a while. Mike had taken the car apart and meticulously stored pieces in baggies and boxes. That is when Roy Belloir came into the picture. A year ago, Mike and Hope dropped the car off at Belloir Auto Service and Repair. Owner Roy

Belloir assigned his brother, Larry Belloir, to the project.

“It literally came in boxes and we had to keep all the boxes under the car, in the trunk of the car—and slowly going through everything,” Roy said.

When they weren’t working on it, they were waiting to find a part.

“We had to figure out if we were missing something or just didn’t have it,” Roy said.

A Ford Fairlane isn’t the kind of vehicle where parts can be found at the local parts store. For Mike and Hope, they may have even added to the fun.

Hope and I went to Carlisle, Penn., to get parts for it at a giant Ford car show and SWAP meet,” Mike said. “There were certain parts

that you just couldn’t find. They are not on the Internet, you can’t buy it new. There are very few parts we could buy new.”

Roy explained how much not being able to locate those parts complicated things.

“It took a month to get that part right there,” he said, referring to the water by-pass valve for the heater core. “They were on eBay, and somebody must have had some new old stock from years ago. He would put it on eBay and it was on auction.”

Roy thought the part would go for around \$50.

“He put it on there and it went way over \$50,” he said. “Then I kept searching and another one would pop up on eBay. I think the last time I put \$150, which I thought was an astronomical price. It went up to \$145, but we just needed that part. When I finally won it, I was like, that’s crazy.”

Larry added that the water valve had to be relocated on account of the fiberglass hood. Roy said the new location is more obscure.

Other parts were purchased from NAPA Auto Parts, O’Reilly Auto Parts, and Guffey Automotive in Belle.

Several modifications had to be made

See **Fairlane**, Page 4B

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Fairlane • from page 3B

to get the car running, and substitute parts located. Luckily, the original Fairlane motor was used for nearly 20 years with limited modifications in Ford's car line. They were able to substitute some, and modify others. Mike has his favorite parts.

"If you look under the hood—the hood is kind of the star—and the engine, it's a conglomeration of stuff," Mike explained about some of the substitutions and modifications. "The intake manifold, with the six-pack setup, I bought at a swap meet in 1985, before we ever owned the car. The heads that are on it are Eldbrock, I got those—a client didn't have any money and had them stored and paid me with those heads. I had them stored for 10 years to put them on here."

The motor is a 390 board 40 over.

"It's got a competition cam," Mike said. "Pretty hot cam."

Mike started it up to drive it into Roy's shop.

"It sounds good," Roy said. "This is the first time I have gotten to hear the car run with the exhaust manifold on it. When it was here, it was open manifold. This thing is extremely loud with open manifold."

Other modifications included T&D roller

rockers, electronic ignition, cober jet manifolds, and the whole suspension was cut out and replaced with modern suspension.

"None of this front suspension is factory," Mike said.

"It handles better," Roy added.

"Everyone told me it should drive like an '05 Mustang," Mike added. He isn't sure yet if it does. "I have only driven it on and off the trailer so far."

Roy said another cool feature on the car is that Mike purchased an electric assist brake booster.

"It's the first one we encountered or messed with," Roy said. "Well, you had to use that style to have power brakes because there is no electrical. There is no room for a brake booster."

Mike's favorite part is the induction set-up.

"Some people call that a six-pack. Its three two barrel carburetors," he said. "It is kind of old school. That whole set up was probably made in 1960-62. It's just got kind of an old school look to it." Everything under the hood is Eldbrock. It has Eldbrock heads, valve covers, intake and water pump.

He isn't the only one who is thrilled that



THE INTERIOR was originally midnight blue. It took three years for the new interior to be completed.

this project is nearly completed. Hope is ecstatic about the project being finished.

"You asked about things my wife really liked about it?" Mike asked. "That would be the wheels and tires. She spent a long time figuring out what wheels and tires she wanted."

Hope chose Mickey Thompsons 215s on the front 245s on the rear because they are different and there aren't many people that have them.

"I told her the other day, I would be

See **Fairlane**, Page 5B

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Fairlane • from page 4B

in trouble if I drove it first, huh?," Mike laughed. "And she said 'yeah, it's my car.'"

Mike expects she will drive it a lot in the summer.

The car still needs a few things. The back seat hasn't been reinstalled yet, nor



THE '67 Fairlane has a 390 cubic inch V6 board 40 over with a six-pack intake manifold.

has a new soft top. She also needs a name, but Mike says they don't really name their cars. Right now, they are just thrilled to have it going again.

Her empty spot at the shop is bitter sweet for Roy and his mechanics. The Mundwillers picked up the car nearly a month ago.

"It was weird, the next morning walking in, it almost felt we were in a different shop. It felt like we walked into the wrong place," Roy said.

It's Larry who has really been different,

the men agreed.

"It was pretty much Larry's main project," Roy said. "It is better to keep it that way because when you get too many people involved, mistakes can happen."

Mike added that Larry seemed like a new man. Roy calculated over 380 hours that Larry has put into the Fairlane's restoration.

The couple doesn't know how many pennies they sank into the project.

"I told my wife a couple of years ago, we are not keeping track," Mike said.

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AFTER ALMOST 25 years in Mike Mundwiler's garage his 1990 wedding gift to his wife Hope is almost complete. The 1967 Ford Fairlane needs the back seat and the new convertible installed to be ready for the open road.

THE REPUBLICAN publishes a car care section twice a year, spring and fall. We look for interesting local car stories to feature in these sections. If you know of one please contact Roxie Murphy at 573-437-2323 or email her at rmurphy@wardpub.com.

PHOTOS BY ROXIE MURPHY



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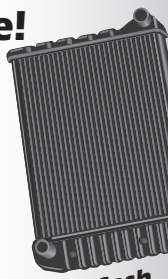
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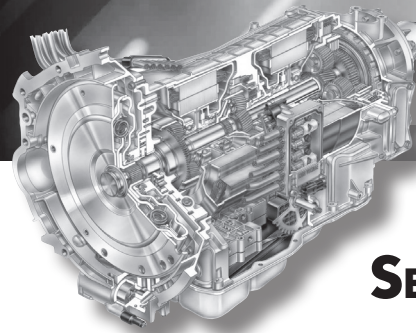
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Pickup trucks remain popular among car buyers

Pickup trucks have long been among the most popular vehicles sold, and Statista states the number of new pickup trucks sold in the United States continues to grow. Between 2015 and 2016, 2.7 million pickups were sold, and some 2.24 million of those were full-sized pickups. According to the data and statistics site GoodCarBadCar, Canadian sales of pickup trucks jumped by 8 percent in 2016, equating to roughly 27,000 additional units sold.

A recent study from the Automotive News Data Center found the big three pickup manufacturers, which include Ford, GM and Dodge, sell an average of 6,500 trucks every day in North America. The automotive news resource The Drive points out the Ford F-150 has been the best-selling truck for 40 consecutive years.

While the popularity of pickup trucks may be evident to today's motorists, just who is behind the wheels of those trucks may come as a surprise. According to a recent study from MaritzCX, covering the 2016 model year, more people from affluent families are opting for pickup trucks than economy cars. The Ford F-150 was the most popular vehicle among households earning more

than \$200,000 a year. Jeep Grand Cherokee, Honda Pilot and Jeep Wrangler were also tops among high-income Americans.

Other factors also may be contributing to the popularity of pickup trucks. A survey from Insure.com asked 2,000 licensed drivers ages 18 and up to rank the kinds of vehicles driven by the most attractive members of the opposite sex. The survey found that women prefer drivers of black pickup trucks.

Motorists who have never before driven pickup trucks but are mulling whether or not to join the truck-loving masses can consider a host of factors as they begin looking for trucks.

- **Size:** Pickups are larger than many other vehicles and tend to be heavier. As a result, when driving a pickup, leave more space for braking and do not tailgate.

- **Blind spots:** Because pickup trucks are longer than cars, they may have larger blind spots. Drivers should adjust the mirrors to diminish as much of their blind spots as possible. Also, give ample notice when changing lanes or making turns.

See **Trucks**, Page 9B



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Pros and cons of connected cars

While smart cars that can communicate and dial into command centers, provide directions or even blast off back to 1985 were mere concepts 30 to 40 years ago, today automakers have made tech-savvy cars a reality. Cars have become computers on wheels, and there's seemingly no end to the features that many vehicles are sporting. However, are these connections truly a boon to drivers or a safety bust?

Pros

Proponents of connected cars say safety features embedded in the vehicles, such as GM's On-Star platform and similar services for other brands, make a strong case for connected cars. These systems can immediately alert for emergency assistance if there is an accident or if a passenger is unresponsive. The future of other safety features includes vehicles that can sense obstacles in the environment and make modifications to GPS routes based on accidents or road blocks, passing that information on to other cars to create safer conditions.

Service centers can use connected cars to digitally diagnose problems and possibly

reduce more invasive mechanical measures. Insurance companies can use data pulled from driving habits to determine rates based on safe driving behaviors. Manufacturers can track data such as how optimally a person has driven to develop more efficient vehicles.

Another benefit of smart cars is infotainment, which truly takes internet use mobile in every sense of the word. Apps learn drivers' preferences and can fine tune music, news and other entertainment options to make trips even more enjoyable.

Cons

One of the biggest arguments against connected cars is the increased level of distraction. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration says that, in 2015 alone, 3,477 people were killed and 391,000 were injured in motor vehicle crashes involving distracted drivers. During daylight hours, approximately 660,000 drivers are using cell phones while driving. A smart car is essentially a smartphone on wheels, which may prompt greater levels of distraction.

Another area of concern is security. As cars become more connected to the internet,



they can become greater targets for hackers. Researchers have already shown how hackers can take control of the vehicle, forcing them to brake or steer elsewhere. There's also the opportunity for people to be digitally spied on or for criminals to gain other

personal information through driving habits.

It seems as though connected cars are here to stay, and drivers must weigh the pros and cons of having this technology at their fingertips when behind the wheel.

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Your vehicle has a recall ... now what?



RECALLS CAN affect any vehicle. Follow the instructions on the recall notice and have the problem addressed promptly.

Vehicles are expensive. When motorists drive their vehicles away from a dealership, they hope to travel many miles before they need to come back for maintenance. But manufacturers sometimes issue recalls that can affect drivers of both new and old vehicles.

Recalls are safety precautions taken should a portion of a vehicle or the entire car or truck not operate in the manner it was intended. In many instances, auto manufacturers will directly contact customers who are affected by a recall via a letter, email or both. Individuals also can stay current on recalls by visiting the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's website (www.NHTSA.gov).

According to AutoTrader, recalls are becoming more common because of the complexity of modern vehicles. NHTSA flagged nearly 22 million vehicles for safety issues in 2013, and that number is on the rise. Drivers can follow these important steps if they learn of a recall.

- Don't panic, but don't ignore recalls. The experts at Kelley Blue

Book say recalls often occur due to a problem in the manufacturing process in similar models, and this issue may surface in other vehicles. Recalls do not guarantee vehicles will malfunction or break down. However, consumers are urged to take recalls seriously, adopting a "better safe than sorry" approach when recalls are announced.

- Follow the instructions. A recall notice should come with instructions. Instructions often advise drivers to take their vehicles to the dealership where the cars were purchased. Notices may provide information regarding nearby dealerships for drivers who have moved since buying their cars or trucks.

- No payment should be necessary. The cost of repairing the recalled part should not fall on your shoulders. Such repairs are paid by the manufacturer. The financial resource Bankrate.com notes that, "if you had the repair made before the recall was issued (up to a full year), the automaker is legally obligated to reimburse you, as long as you had the work done at

one of its franchised dealers." Save all receipts for the work. If work was done by a private mechanic, drivers still may be eligible for reimbursement.

- Be patient. Dealerships are not responsible for making repairs until the date indicated on the recall

notice, so motorists may need to wait before having their vehicles repaired.

- Request a loaner vehicle. In some instances, recalls may take a few days to fix. Although not every dealership may make loaner vehicles available, it's still worth

requesting one so you are not inconvenienced.

Anyone having difficulty with a recall can contact the NHTSA online, by phone or by mail. Those who suspect a safety problem also can contact the agency and report their concerns.



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Trucks • from page 7B

- Reverse: Upon purchasing a pickup, first-time truck owners may benefit from practicing driving in reverse so they can grow accustomed to doing so in a truck.

- Hauling gear: Be sure to properly restrain items that are hauled in the pickup truck bed, or invest in a bed cover so nothing is lost and safety is not compromised.

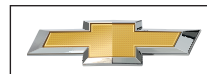
- Inclement weather driving: Pickup trucks have very little weight in the back when their beds are empty. This can cause trucks to fishtail on wet or snowy roads. Alleviate this by placing some sandbags in truck beds before driving in poor weather.

Pickup trucks are among the most popular vehicles on the road, but drivers may need to alter their driving habits when operating them.

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How to avoid and repair flat tires

Nothing can delay road trips more suddenly than flat tires. Unfortunately, because tires are the only part of the vehicle constantly in contact with the road, wear and tear is to be expected.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration says that flat tires and blowouts are a leading cause of highway traffic accidents. Even though flats cannot be prevented, there are ways to make tires less vulnerable and make vehicles safer along the way.

Flat tire avoidance

Routine inspection and tire maintenance is essential to their performance. In addition, paying attention to road hazards and avoiding them when possible can prolong the life of tires.

- **Tire pressure:** Tires should be maintained at the correct air pressure indicated on the sidewall or as advised by the manufacturer. Tires with too much air can be damaged by bumpy roads and potholes. Tires that are not inflated enough may increase friction on the roadway, resulting in a blowout. Check tire pressure routinely,

and do so when the tires have rested for three hours. Many vehicles now monitor tire pressure automatically and alert drivers through a signal on the dashboard.

- **Tire wear:** The advisors at Select Auto Imports say that inspecting tires for uneven wear should be a routine part of maintenance. If tires show uneven wear, they may be more susceptible to flats or blowouts. Tire rotations can help alleviate uneven wear. The NHTSA recommends tires be rotated every 5,000 miles.

- **Tire treads:** The Allstate Insurance company says to look for worn tire treads. Check for wear bar indicator marks located between the tread pattern of the tires. If the wear bar is level with the treads, it's time for new tires. Otherwise, place a quarter between the grooves of the tire. If the tread doesn't extend beyond the top of Washington's head, it's a good idea to replace the tires.

- **Construction sites:** Drivers should try to avoid areas under construction. Rocks, nails, metal shards, glass, and divots in the roads can cause punctures and eventually flats.

Flat tire repair

When flats occur, having the right tools and understanding the procedure for fixing the flat is key.

Drivers will need an inflated spare tire, a jack, a lug wrench, bracing material (to keep the vehicle from rolling, such as a brick or piece of wood), and the vehicle's owner's manual. Goodyear says it is essential to fix the flat in a safe area away from traffic and on a flat surface.

- Use the owner's manual to find the correct position to place the jack to lift the car.

- Remove hubcaps or center covers to access the lug nuts. With the lug wrench, loosen lug nuts in a counterclockwise direction.

- Take off the tire and put on the spare. Replace and tighten the lug nuts. Replace hubcaps or covers.

- Slowly lower the vehicle and drive cautiously to ensure the spare is in working order.

- Purchase a new tire or have a hole plugged or repaired at a tire center.





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How to become more attractive to auto lenders

It is common for consumers to spend months researching and saving for new vehicles. But many auto buyers do not put the same amount of effort into finding auto loans. That's unfortunate, as Consumer Reports notes that those who do not have financing arranged before visiting a dealership may not get the best loan terms.

Prior to buying a vehicle, drivers should give consideration to how they appear in the eyes of creditors. Few if any people pay for cars or trucks in full at the time of purchase. As a result, it's key for buyers to make themselves as attractive as possible in lenders' eyes.

Improving credit score

Lenders use consumers' credit scores to determine how likely they will be to honor the terms of a potential loan. Consumers' FICO® scores are the type of credit score most often used to make lending decisions. FICO scores range between 300 and 850. The higher the score, the lower the risk to lenders. However, lenders do not necessarily use the same formula to assess risk.

The first step potential borrowers should take is figuring out what their credit score is, and what information is on their credit

report. For those who haven't done so already, they can request a free copy of their credit reports from the three major credit monitoring bureaus.

Once credit reports are obtained, consumers can work to correct any mistakes or inconsistencies. Some of these may be simple fixes, while others may take some effort. A 2012 study from the Federal Trade Commission found that one in five consumers had an error on at least one of their credit reports.

Consumers also can improve their credit scores by doing the following:

- Make payments on time, as payment history can have the greatest effect on a bad credit score, according to Credit.com.
- Reduce debt by paying off balances on credit cards or other loans.
- Obtain a mix of different credit sources, such as those in the form of credit cards, furniture financing, home ownership, and auto loans. This, too, can raise credit scores and make borrowers appear less risky.
- Keep old credit accounts open, as they establish a strong credit history. Try not to open too many new accounts in a short period of time.



Shopping loans

Those with strong credit have more wiggle room in terms of loan negotiation. A person with a high FICO score may be eligible for better terms, including a low interest rate.

Consumers should consider the length of the loan and how much they can afford before signing any paperwork. Lengthy loans will cost buyers much more in the long run when factoring in interest payments. Still, Edmunds reports that, over the last 10 years,

the length of the average car loan has risen above 68 months. Financial experts advise that buyers avoid relying on lengthier loans simply to buy more car than they can afford.

Consider large lenders when shopping for auto loans. Such lenders may have better rates than going through dealerships directly. Other lenders include credit unions, local banks and finance companies.

Borrowers with strong credit will be attractive to lenders and will have more loan options at their disposal.

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Four simple ways to extend the life of your vehicle

Automobiles are significant investments. According to Kelley Blue Book, the average transaction price for light vehicles was \$34,968 in January 2017, marking a 3 percent increase from just a year earlier.

The decision to spend tens of thousands of dollars on a new vehicle is not one consumers should take lightly. Once drivers purchase their new vehicles, they can protect their investments and get greater returns on those investments by prioritizing maintenance and taking simple yet effective steps to extend the lives of their cars and trucks.

1. Drive defensively.

Aggressive driving is dangerous and can have adverse effects on a vehicle. When driving, always obey posted speed limits and avoid accelerating and decelerating quickly. Such a style of driving can strain vehicle engines and drive trains while negatively affecting fuel efficiency and wearing down brakes, states the National Institute of Automotive Service Excellence.

2. Maintain a clean vehicle.

Car washes do more than just clean a vehicle. Routine washing and waxing can remove dirt that, if left on a vehicle, can gradually scratch paint and contribute to chips and rust. Over time, rust can affect vehicle performance and may even compromise the safety of drivers and their passengers if bad enough frame rust affects structural integrity. Routine washing also can remove road salt from vehicles. Salt can build up during winter when roads are routinely treated during and after snowstorms. Road salt can be extremely corrosive and, if left unremoved from a vehicle, can contribute to rust that ultimately can cause extensive damage to a vehicle.

3. Routinely check tire pressure.

Many of today's new vehicles alert drivers when tire pressure is low. Drivers should not ignore such warnings, as low tire pressure can affect engine performance by forcing it to work harder than should be necessary. Engines that are forced to work harder than they need to likely won't last as long as those that run efficiently. Low tire pressure also negatively affects fuel efficiency, potentially costing drivers substantial amounts of money over time. Drivers of older vehicles without tire pressure alerts should routinely check tire pressure and keep tires adequately inflated. Vehicles that are slow to accelerate from resting positions may not have enough air in their tires.

4. Adhere to maintenance guidelines.

Drivers may have heard that today's vehicles were built to go longer periods of time between oil changes and tuneups than the vehicles of yesteryear. But drivers should still adhere to manufacturer-recommended maintenance guidelines. Upon buying new vehicles, drivers should read their owners' manuals to determine recommended maintenance intervals, and stick to those intervals for as long as they have their vehicles.

Cognizant of the sizable investments they're making when buying new vehicles, many drivers want to get as many miles out of their vehicles as possible. Simple maintenance and safe driving habits can go a long way toward keeping vehicles on the road for years to come.



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