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2023 Fall **CAR CARE**

This fall's featured vehicle is James Goggin's 1969 Plymouth Road Runner

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A Sublime '69 Road Runner with a "Beep-Beep" attitude



BY ROXIE MURPHY
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James Goggin is a race car man, but his first love is a 1969 lime green Plymouth Road Runner that his children fondly calls "Beep-Beep."

The Road Runner is a mid-sized car that focused on performance and was fast in its day. As a race car, Goggin enters it in the daily driver class.

"I've had the car since I was 18 years old," said Goggin, owner of Xccelerator Transporting, LLC in Rosebud. "I painted it when I was 20."

The original car wasn't much to look at 23 years ago when he bought it. While the body was in decent condition, it averaged at least two different colors — primer and forest green.

"It came out of Georgia," Goggin said. "I bought it from my dad who bought it to flip. I ended up purchasing it from him."

Goggin said he completely rebuilt the car and it became one of his first collectors. He

MOST OF the time Wile E. Coyote sits on the dash. For this photo he is enjoying some fresh air.

FEATURE PHOTOS BY DENNIS WARDEN AND ROXIE MURPHY

See **Road Runner** page 3B

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Road Runner •

From page 2B

previously owned a body shop in Owensville and painted the car himself.

“I know every flaw,” he said. “That’s why I hated painting cars. But I hate when other people do it too.”

For nearly 12 years the car sat in storage.

“About a month ago I decided to get it out and put a new motor, transmission, and rear-end under it and take it racing, all within a couple of weeks,” Goggin said. “For me, my life is the trucking, so when I get a minute to do something else I jump in full throttle to get something done.”

Beep-Beep is named for the sound the horn makes, specific to the 1968-70 models.

“All three of my kids called it that,” Goggin said. “That one is their favorite cars.”

Goggin’s oldest daughter will be 23 in December and has made it clear that the Road Runner is the only car her father can never sell.

“When she was born, I had this car, it has always been the same color, and everyone has

See **Road Runner** page 4B



JAMES GOGGIN'S '69 Plymouth Road Runner came from Georgia with two tones, primer and F8 Dark Forrest Green paint. Now it sports a Sublime Green color popular with Chrysler sports cars for that era.

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GOGGIN SHOWS off the 500 cubic inch V-8 with a six-pack on top which propels the car in the high 10s through the quarter mile.

Road Runner • From page 3B

known this car since I was a kid,” Goggin said. “It’s nothin’ special, but it is to me. My mom and dad didn’t have a lot. Even though I purchased it from my dad, I feel like it is a part of him because my dad’s favorite car is a 1969. I grew up with that style car.”

Goggin said the Road Runner may not be his favorite car, but it means the most to him. He didn’t rebuild it to race it.

“I raced with my dad in the early 2000s at a Monster MOPAR race,” he said.

His dad wasn’t a racer, though, and Goggin began racing on his own. Today, Goggin has his own fast car collection and previously raced another car in the daily driver class. It was recently banned from the class because it was too fast.

“I still wanted to race the class though,” Goggin said. “I thought, you know, I’ve always raced two classes. There is nothing special about this car, it has 500 cubic inches with a six-pack — the six-pack is three two-barrel carburetors, and they called it a six-pack back in the day.

This car, you could jump in and take

See **Road Runner** page 5B



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Road Runner • From page 4B

off to the grocery store. I drove it back and forth to Owensville probably 10 times the other day. There is no real feel to it.”

The 10-second car has a fiberglass lift hood, a special feature that allows easier access to the engine. The hood is secured by four hooks.

“Back in the drag racing days and even today, the hood is difficult to work around when you are working

on the car,” Goggin said. “It’s all stock on the inside. The whole deal with getting it running again, I am hoping to have one more go at restoring the car back to original and repaint it,” he said. “All new interior, seat covers, and carpet. I have the stuff to restore it, I just haven’t had the time. Time passes by before you

See **Road Runner** page 6B

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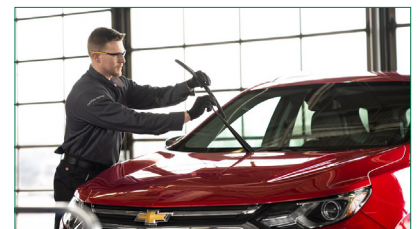
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Road Runner • From page 5B

know it.”

Wile E. Coyote has a front seat view on the dashboard of the Road Runner in a nod to the old Warner Bros cartoons. Plymouth paid an estimated \$50,000 to Warner Bros to use the characters and the famous “beep-beep” for the horn.

“A lot of the stuff you’ll see, you’ll see the Coyote chasing and the Road Runner with his dust cloud,” Goggin said.

The car included stickers of the bird in its original production and Redline Tires

“In 1969, the Road Runner bird (stickers) came from the factory,” Goggin said. “That’s what came on the cars. Chrysler did a lot of things like that, they had the bright colors.”

Goggin said he is a MOPAR guy. Part of his attachment to Chrysler brands comes from his grandfather Truman Goggin who worked for Chrysler in Fenton. His love extends to the exotic colors

Chrysler used on its fast cars. He painted the car Sublime Green. If it does go back to its original color, it will be F8 Dark Forrest Green.

“When I rebuild it, I will put it back original along with the number matching motor that came out of this car. It was in the trunk of the car when I got it, and I had it rebuilt,” he said. “If I was gonna race it, I didn’t want to risk the motor. So I put another crate motor in the car.”

Goggin said he has pieces when he is ready for the rebuild.

“I’ve got the build sheet and everything for the car,” he said.

The original factory motor was in the trunk of the car when Goggin’s father, Glenn, purchased the vehicle.

As far as its racing credentials, Goggin raced the car at Builder’s Brawl Races on Oct. 21 and won second place. The Road Runner ran a high tens, low elevens second race in the quarter-mile stretch.

“For most people it’s fast,” he said. “I race it in a daily driver class. I just put a new motor and



THE DASHBOARD and seats to the ‘69 Road Runner are on Goggin’s list to be restored.

transmission in it to make a race that was two weeks ago.”

Goggin takes two cars to the races when he goes.

“I’ve been the only guy to race two classes at every event and the only guy to take two cars to the finals at every event,” he said.

“I’ve raced it a lot and in a lot of different places.”

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1969 Plymouth Road Runner: Motor Trend's Car of the Year

With information and facts from Wikipedia:

The Plymouth Road Runner was named Motor Trend's Car of the Year for 1969. It was the first budget muscle car, and came in three body styles, with a convertible added to the lineup.

Built from 1968 to 1980, the mid-size car was built in Detroit, Mich. and St. Louis, Mo. The car was developed as a lower-priced, basic trim model to the upscale Plymouth GTX.

The Road Runner of 1968-1970 was based on the Belvedere, while the GTX was based on the Sport Satellite, a car with higher-level trim and slight differences in the grilles and taillights.

The interior was spartan with a basic vinyl bench seat, lacking even carpets in early models, and few options were available—such as power steering and front disc brakes, AM radio, air conditioning (except with the 426 Hemi) and automatic transmission. A floor-mounted shifter (for the four-speed) featured only a rubber boot and no console so that a bench seat could be used.

The standard engine was an exclusive "Roadrunner" 383 cu in (6.3 L) B-series V8 engine with a 4-barrel Carter Carburetor rated at 335 bhp (340 PS; 250 kW) at 5200 rpm and 425 lb. ft at 3400 rpm of torque.

Its extra 5 hp rating was the result of using the radical cam from the 440 Super Commando and a .25 raise in compression to 10.5:1 (vs. 10.25:1 with the 330 hp (246 kW) 383).

When air conditioning was ordered, the cars received



the 330 hp version, as the radical cam specs of the 335 bhp version did not create enough vacuum to accommodate air conditioning. A \$714 option was the 426 cu in (7.0 L) Hemi with 2X4 Carter AFB carburetors rated at 425 bhp at 5000 rpm and 490 lb. ft at 4000 rpm of torque.

The standard equipment transmission was a 4-speed manual transmission with floor shifter, and the three-speed Torque Flite automatic transmission was optional. Early four-speed 1968 Road Runners featured Inland shifters, which were replaced by Hurst shifters during the course of the model year.

Plymouth expected to sell about 20,000 units in 1968; actual sales numbered around 45,000. This placed the Road

Runner third in sales among muscle cars, with only the Pontiac GTO and Chevy's SS-396 Chevelle outselling it.

Dodge debuted the Road Runner's cousin, the Super Bee, as a mid-1968 offering after seeing Plymouth's success with the Road Runner.

The Road Runner added a convertible option for 1969 with 2,128 such models produced that year. All were 383 cu in (6.3 L) engine cars, except for ten which were equipped with a 426 cu in (7.0 L) Hemi.

Sales of the 1970 Road Runner dropped by more than 50 percent over the previous year to around 41,000 units (about 1,000 ahead of Pontiac's GTO but still about 13,000 units behind Chevy's Chevelle SS-396/454).

This would also be the last year of the Road Runner convertible with 834 total productions. Only 3 Hemi (R) code Road Runner convertibles were built (plus 1 to Canada).

The declining sales of Road Runner and other muscle cars were the results of a move by insurance companies to add surcharges for muscle car policies—making insurance premiums for high-performance vehicles a costly proposition.

Also, Plymouth introduced another bargain-basement muscle car for 1970, the compact Road Runner 340 which was powered by a 275 hp 340 4-BBL V8 which in the lighter-weight compact A-body could perform as well if not better than a 383 Road Runner. Furthermore, the Road Runner 340 was priced even lower than the Road Runner, and its smaller engine qualified it for much lower insurance rates.

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Five tips for buying a teen's first vehicle

Adolescence is an exciting time in a young person's life, but one specific development may eclipse all others in the level of excitement it generates: getting a driver's license. The ability to legally drive affords teenagers, long dependent on family or friends to get around, much more freedom.

While most teenagers hone their driving skills by borrowing the family car, over time teens may need a car of their own. Buying a car is an important financial decision. Whether a teen is purchasing a new or preowned vehicle, there are some tips to consider to secure a vehicle that is safe, affordable and reliable.

- **Is the time right?** Everyone in the household may be anxious to add an extra car to the mix because it may alleviate trying to juggle use of one of the other family cars. However, do not rush into the transaction. In recent years, a lack of inventory related to the pandemic drove up the prices of both new and pre-owned vehicles. Families may need to wait until inventory increases and prices drop.

- **Establish expectations.** Parents and teens should have frank conversations about responsibilities regarding buying cars. Talk about who will be paying for the vehicle as well as insurance, maintenance and all of the other expenses that go into vehicle

ownership.

- **Financing may not be an option.** Teenagers typically have no credit history, so it's unlikely they will secure automotive loans without a co-signer. Furthermore, teens under the age of 18 may find they are not legally able to sign contracts or have a vehicle title in their name. In such instances, an adult will have to hold the title and ownership until the teen turns 18.

- **Prioritize safety.** According to Honda, motor vehicles are the leading cause of teenage death, so it is vital to find a reliable and safe car or truck. Vehicle size, crash test performance and safety features are the most important factors to consider when looking at cars for teens. A car with a high safety rating also may translate to discounted auto insurance, which can be a big help considering teens typically pay more out of pocket for insurance.

- **Opt for a used vehicle.** While a shiny new car parked in the driveway is appealing, preowned vehicles are more affordable. The insurance premiums on new cars are higher, and teens don't have as much driving experience, so dings and dents may be par for the course. It can be more costly to repair a new vehicle than an older one.

Families must consider a host of factors when looking for a teenager's first car.



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How to prepare your car for winter

Summer and fall can stake their claim as road trip season, and even devoted drivers may admit that winter is generally a less desirable time to take to the open road. The elements factor heavily into that reputation, as fewer hours of daylight, snow and ice are just some of the variables that can make it less enjoyable, and potentially more dangerous, to drive in winter.

In anticipation of adverse driving conditions, vehicle owners can take various steps to prepare their cars and trucks for winter.

- Upgrade your wiper blades. Perhaps nothing is compromised more than visibility when driving in winter compared to other times of year. Snow makes it hard to see when driving, but fewer hours of daylight also can affect visibility. In fact, the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety reports that approximately half of all fatal crashes occur between 6 p.m. and 6 a.m., even though the number of drivers on the road during those hours is considerably lower than it is during the daytime. The difficulty of driving at night is even more significant when wiper blades are not up to the task of keeping rain and snow off drivers' windshields. Prior to winter, inspect wiper blades and upgrade them, if necessary. Streaks left on a windshield are a telltale sign that blades need to be replaced.

- Purchase winter tires. Winter tires may not be necessary in regions with relatively mild winters. However, drivers accustomed to winters marked by heavy snowfall and/or icy roads should consider replacing their

existing tires with winter tires. Many newer vehicles are now equipped with all-season tires, which the tire experts at Bridgestone note provide great performance but are not designed to handle extreme winter conditions like snow and ice. Winter tires are specially designed to handle such conditions, making them a worthy investment for drivers who live in regions where it's not unusual to encounter snow and ice throughout the winter.

- Study up on your engine oil. Some vehicle manufacturers recommend different grades of oil depending on the range of temperatures a car or truck will be driven in. The owner's manual will likely indicate if the manufacturer recommends using a different type of engine oil in especially cold temperatures. Even if the manual does not include such a suggestion, drivers can seek the advice of a local mechanic.

- Schedule a pre-winter tuneup. Even if a vehicle is not due for a tuneup, it can be wise to have it looked over by a local mechanic before the arrival of harsh winter weather. A mechanic can check the radiator, hoses and other components that could be affected by especially cold weather in the months to come. If any issues are found, address them immediately. After all, it's better to be proactive than leave yourself vulnerable to breakdowns or other issues once the mercury drops.

As fall gives way to winter, drivers can take steps to keep their cars running strong and safe in the months ahead.

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Warning signs that brakes are faltering

Automotive problems are often best left to professionals. Though seasoned car enthusiasts may be capable of diagnosing and fixing car troubles without the assistance of a trusted mechanic, most drivers are better off letting the pros address issues under the hood.

But drivers can still play a vital role in vehicle maintenance. Learning to recognize warning signs of various problems that can affect cars can prevent breakdowns and potentially costly repairs. And in certain instances, such as when the brake system is not working properly, knowing how to spot problems before they escalate into something larger can make drivers and their passengers safer and potentially prevent accidents.

Television shows and movies have lent credence to the notion that brake problems are marked by the sudden cessation of a vehicle's ability to stop. Though that can happen, warning signs of fading brake systems tend to be more subtle.

- **Noises:** Much like a knocking sound typically indicates a problem with a vehicle's air-fuel-ratio mixture, certain noises also suggest there are problems with the brakes. The most noticeable such sign is a high-pitched squeal that occurs when drivers apply the brakes. But grinding sounds and noises like scratching and scraping also warrant a visit to a brake specialist.

- **Increase in stopping distance:** An increase in the distance a vehicle travels before it stops after the brakes are applied indicates that there's an issue with the brakes. This issue may or may not require a brake replacement. In fact, it's sometimes indicative that brake fluid levels are low, which can be remedied quickly and easily. However, an increase in stopping distance is significant enough



that it should be brought to the attention of a brake specialist immediately.

- **Pulling upon stopping:** Another warning sign of brake problems is when the vehicle noticeably pulls to one side as it comes to a stop. This indicates that one side of the brakes is malfunctioning while the other is working properly. Like other issues with brakes, this one requires immediate attention from an automotive professional.

Brake systems should be inspected during routine maintenance visits. But issues with brakes can arise even after such inspections, which underscores how important it is that drivers learn to recognize the warning signs of brake problems.



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Notable roads to drive in North America

With so much land and a wide variety of terrain, North America is an ideal place to take to the open road. Indeed, car enthusiasts have answered the call of the open road since automobiles became a vital part of people's lives decades and decades ago.

Road trips remain a fun and popular way to travel. With so many miles of highway ahead of them, drivers can consider this list of notable roads in North America as they plan to see some sights from behind the wheel.

Highway 12 (Utah)

The unique landscapes of the American southwest are on display along Highway 12 in southern Utah. Along Highway 12, road trippers can motor their way through national parks while taking in breathtaking natural views and the region's distinct slickrock.

Lake Shore Drive (Chicago)

Though this 15-mile stretch of road won't make for a long journey, it's definitely one to take in when visiting the Windy City. Drive along the shore of Lake Michigan, looking out one side of the vehicle to take in its sandy shores and the other to see the stunning Chicago skyline.

Pacific Rim Highway (Vancouver)

A truly engaging experience awaits visitors to Vancouver's Pacific Rim Highway, which features the stunning natural beauty Canada is known for. Ancient rainforests, awe-inspiring mountain ranges and sandy, secluded beaches are just a handful of the sights to see along this breathtaking stretch of road.

Great River Road

Drivers with plenty of time on their hands can traverse the Great River Road, which

is a collection of state and local roads that follow the course of the Mississippi River. There's plenty to take in on this stretch of scenic roadway that snakes its way through 10 states.

Highway 60 Corridor (Ontario)

The Highway 60 Corridor passes through the southern portion of Algonquin Park. Geological formations, pristine rivers and expansive forests are just some of the stunning natural features and idyllic settings that await drivers who take to the corridor.

Highway 50 (Nevada)

Though it might seem impossible in a nation with more than 330 million residents, there are still places in the United States where drivers can feel alone and isolated. Perhaps nowhere provides that feeling of solitude better than the stretch of Highway 50 in Nevada. Pony Express stations and other abandoned relics of a bygone era are just a few of the sights to see on this lonely stretch of highway that provides stunning views of the southwest's signature expansive skies.

Highland Scenic Highway (West Virginia)

Drivers who take to the Western Scenic Highway in West Virginia will gain a greater appreciation for the late John Denver's hit song, "Take Me Home, Country Roads." The Highland Scenic Highway snakes through the Monongahela National Forest, which boasts more than its share of breathtaking views. Road trippers should know that the U.S. Department of Agriculture strongly discourages traveling the road between November and April, as conditions can be especially treacherous in winter.

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The best-selling EVs on the road today

Electric vehicles (EVs) are more visible on the roadways than ever before. Research indicates that EVs are likely to become even more visible in the years ahead. In fact, a recent report from Extrapolate on the global electric vehicle market size estimated that the market would grow from roughly \$230 billion in 2021 to nearly \$700 billion by 2028. That means it's likely there will be even more EVs on the roadways in the immediate future.

The increased visibility of EVs has undoubtedly piqued the curiosity of drivers who have never before driven such vehicles, but might hope to do so sometime in the near future. Drivers accustomed to gas-powered vehicles who aspire to own an EV may be surprised to learn that there are now many more styles and models of EVs on the road than in the past. EVs are even available in popular styles like SUVs. Data from the International Energy Agency indicates there were 51 EV SUV models available in the United States and 19 such EV models in Canada in 2022. That marks a significant increase in both countries since 2018, when the U.S. had just 11 EV SUV models available and Canada had just two.

With more options to choose from, prospective EV buyers may wonder which EV models are currently the most popular. According to Kiplinger, the following were the 10 best-selling EV models in the U.S. in 2022.

1. Tesla Model Y
2. Tesla Model 3
3. Tesla Model S
4. Kia EV6
5. Tesla Model X
6. Ford Mustang Mach-E
7. Chevrolet Bolt
8. Hyundai IONIQ 5
9. Volkswagen ID.4
10. Ford F-150 Lightning

The cost of EVs varies widely, so prospective drivers may want to do a little homework prior to beginning the process of



purchasing an electric vehicle. Government incentives may help to mitigate EV costs, but prospective buyers can still benefit by determining their budget and then identifying which EVs they can afford. Ancillary costs, which may include a home charging station installation, also should be factored in when determining the overall cost of switching from gas-powered vehicles to EVs. Potential cost savings of EVs, including the savings related to no longer needing to pay for fuel, are some additional variables that prospective buyers must consider.

EVs are more visible than ever, and prospective buyers have many options to consider as they look into switching from gas-powered to electric vehicles.

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Modern car features drivers love

Modern vehicles are technological marvels, which has had a profound effect not only on how much drivers enjoy driving, but also how much they're spending to get behind the wheel.

Data from Cox Automotive indicates that the average transaction price of a new vehicle in March 2023 was just over \$48,000. That can raise the eyebrows of any budget-conscious car enthusiast, but it's also worth noting that modern vehicles have become more economical in other ways. For instance, the Environmental Protection Agency indicated that the average fuel efficiency for new cars recently improved to a record 25.4 miles per gallon. More fuel-efficient cars and trucks can lower the costs of vehicle ownership.

Many drivers feel that, in addition to being more fuel-efficient, modern vehicles are more fun. That's because modern vehicles boast a number of popular creature comforts that have changed the way people drive. Drivers who haven't shopped for a new car in recent years can look for any number of fun features as they begin their search for a new vehicle.

• **Electronic door handles:** Though not as common as some features, electronic door handles provide a futuristic, if not entirely necessary, feel. These door handles automatically extend out when drivers approach their cars and then retract when not in use.

This feature is mainly about style, but it also reduces aerodynamic drag, which can help save fuel or, in electric vehicles, improve driving range.

• **Touchscreens:** Screens feature prominently in many parts of the average person's day, so why not when they're in their vehicles as well? Though vehicle touchscreens have been around for years, auto manufacturers are increasingly switching controls for other components, including windshield wipers, to touchscreens, making for a more sleek interior design that is largely button- and knob-free. In addition, various manufacturers are offering larger touchscreens, which can simplify driving in cars that no longer feature physical controls.

• **Keyless entry:** Keyless entry systems, though not new, are another component that can provide a futuristic feel. Keyless entry systems once enabled drivers to keep their key fobs in their pocket and simply unlock their vehicles by pressing a button on the door handle. Though some manufacturers still offer button keyless entry systems, more modern systems automatically unlock as drivers reach for the handle or pull it open.

• **Head-up display:** Arguably as futuristic a feature as car buyers may encounter, the head-up display feature puts information directly in drivers'



line of sight so they are never looking anywhere but toward the road. Information such as vehicle speed and navigation instructions are projected onto the interior of the windshield, not unlike similar

systems that have long been utilized in military planes.

Modern vehicles are loaded with futuristic features that can make driving more fun.

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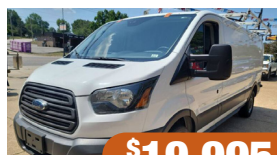
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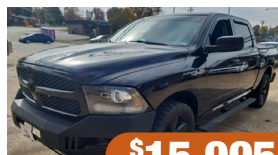
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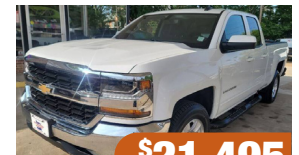
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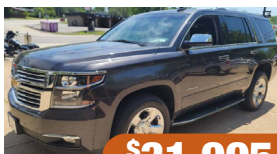
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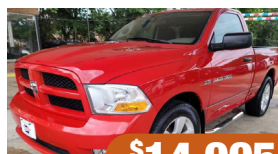
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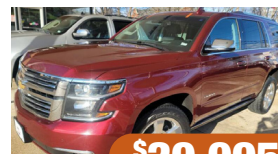
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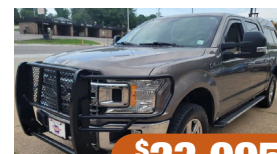
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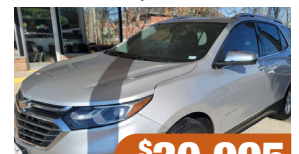
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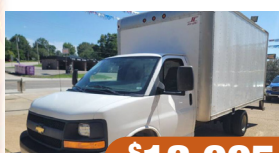
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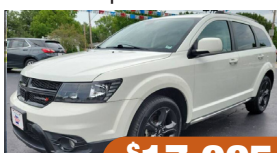
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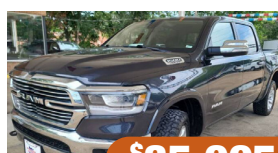
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Three simple maintenance strategies that can keep cars running longer

The last few years have not proven the most advantageous times for new car buyers. According to the Consumer Price Index Summary from the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, buyers paid 12.2 percent more for new vehicles in January 2022 than they had in January 2021. Faced with such a significant increase in price, many drivers understandably want to keep their current cars longer than they might have initially planned.

Data released by S&P Global Mobility in early 2022 indicated that the average vehicle on the road is 12 years and two months old, which marked the highest number in the 20-plus years such information was tracked. A host of variables affect how long drivers keep their cars, but the rising cost of new vehicles has undoubtedly compelled many drivers to aspire to keep their cars for longer periods of time.

Aging cars may require a little more TLC than vehicles that are right off the dealership lot. But the following are three simple tips that can help drivers keep their cars running longer.

1. Become a more careful driver. A careful approach when behind the wheel is safer than aggressive driving and beneficial for your vehicle. When starting, avoid revving the engine, which needlessly wears it down. When out on the road, avoid rapid accelerations, which also contributes to needless wear and tear. Even excessive idling can adversely affect the engine, so keep winter warm-ups to around 30 seconds to prevent damage to engine components.

2. Know when and how to fill up. Every

driver has likely visited a filling station when an oil tanker is busily filling the tanks. That's traditionally been considered a less than ideal time to fill up, as the theory is that filling the tanks stirs up sediment that could then find its way into consumers' gas tanks, adversely affecting their vehicles. However, that's often dependent on the station itself and how much its owners prioritize maintenance of the tank and filtration systems. Drivers who trust their local station owners can likely fill up when the tankers are present without worry. In addition, avoid topping off once the nozzle clicks when filling up. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency notes that topping off is harmful to the planet and the vehicle, as gasoline needs room to expand. When you top off, the extra gas may damage the vapor collection system and cause the vehicle to run less efficiently.

3. Change oil more frequently as the vehicle ages. It's true that modern vehicles no longer require oil changes for every 3,000 miles driven. However, as vehicles age, drivers and their vehicles' engines may benefit from more frequent oil changes than the owner's manual necessarily recommends. Oil changes remove dirt and metal particles from the engine, potentially contributing to a longer life expectancy. More frequent changes can be especially beneficial for vehicles that are routinely driven in stop-and-go traffic.

Rising vehicle costs have compelled many drivers to keep their cars longer than they initially planned. Some simple strategies can help drivers achieve that goal.



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Four strategies to keep kids occupied on long car trips

Road trips and self-driving vacations tend to produce their own unique moments and memories, but that doesn't mean they don't share certain characteristics. Lately, those characteristics might be high gas prices and more traffic as many vacationers drive in an effort to circumvent the escalating cost of air travel. For parents, one component of road trips to count on like clockwork is the moment when kids ask, "Are we there yet?"

A frustration moms and dads from all walks of life and across all generations can share, bored children calling out from the backseat can try any parent's patience. Thankfully, parents can utilize these four strategies to keep kids occupied on long car trips.

1. Take out the tablet. Unlike their own parents, modern moms and dads have a reliable ally in the fight against backseat boredom. Tablets can be loaded with all sorts of entertainment, from e-books to movies to interactive activities to school lessons. Rules governing device usage may be a part of life at home, but parents can relax those rules on the road to ensure kids stay occupied until the family arrives at its destination.

2. Encourage kids to scrapbook the trip. If a road trip involves visiting multiple destinations, parents can encourage kids to spend some time scrapbooking their

experiences in the backseat. Kids can write about the previous day's activities and paste ticket stubs and other mementos from the trip into their book.

3. Transform the backseat into a play area. Parents may prefer their vehicles remain toy-free most of the time, but transforming the backseat into a play area can ensure kids have plenty of things to do and less time to dwell on how long it's taking to get from point A to point B. Avoid packing anything that can be turned into a projectile, especially for children who aren't yet school-aged. But be sure to include some books, puzzles, dolls/action figures, and handheld games.

4. Time the trip well. Of course, kids don't necessarily need to be actively engaged in an activity in order to be occupied during a road trip. If possible, depart in the wee small hours of the morning, which can pay a host of dividends. Leaving before sunrise reduces the chances of being stuck in traffic, thus cutting back on the amount of time the family spends in the car. Leaving early also increases the chances that kids will spend a good portion of the trip sleeping in the backseat.

Road trips with young kids in tow can try any parent's patience. But some useful strategies to keep kids occupied on long car trips can make such excursions much more enjoyable for everyone.




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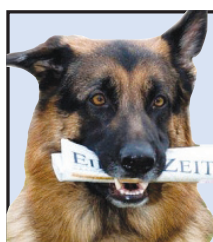
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