

Officials: Vote went 'went very, very smoothly' in Nev.

By Sandra Chereb, Las Vegas Review-Journal

CARSON CITY — Nevada's 2016 election had a few hiccups, but it was overall a smooth, successful exercise in democracy, state and local election officials said Monday.

Despite pre-election chatter about hacking and rigged systems, "Everything went very, very smoothly" during the Nov. 8 vote, Wayne Thorley, elections deputy with the Secretary of State's Office, told the final meeting of Nevada's Election Task Force.

While the national conversation has turned in recent days to a CIA report that concluded Russia intervened in the election to help Republican President-elect Donald Trump, Thorley said there was no evidence of shenanigans at the voting booths in Nevada.

[Read the whole story](#)

Road Beat: Volvo XC60 T6 — more than just safe



The Volvo XC60 T6 is more than just a safe ride.
Photos/Larry Weitzman

By Larry Weitzman

When many people think of Volvo, they think of the model 544 (see Anne Savoy's car in Bull Durham) which reminds me of my family's 1947 Chrysler Windsor. Or they think of the pure three box design of the 144 series which meant first series, four cylinders and four doors. The two-door model was a 142 and the five-door wagon was a 145. Volvo made well over a million of those ubiquitous vehicles in the 1960s and '70s.

Interestingly, those old 140 series, some with over a million miles (it's hard to kill a Swedish tank), are still on the road and have a couple of things in common with the beautiful XC60. Both are powered by a 2 liter four banger and have a length of 183 inches. But the XC60 has a long wheelbase of 109 inches compared to the 102 inches of the 140 series. And where

the 144 engine pounded out 101 hp, this new XC60 pumps out an astounding 302 hp. More on that later.

While the new XC60 is considered a midsize CUV, it is only a couple of inches longer than some compact CUVs. What make the XC60 feel big is its midsize width of 74 inches, so once ensconced in its fabulously comfortable seat, it feels more substantial and spacious. And were just warming up here.

Many of you know Volvo has gone through some hard times, but its sales are growing faster than almost every other manufacturer with worldwide sales expected to top a million vehicles this year. While the Chinese auto company Geely bought Volvo for a song, they haven't moved Volvo production which are built in Sweden and Belgium.



Specifications

Price \$46,350 to \$53,555

Engine

2.0L DOHC, 16 valve supercharged and turbocharged inline four 302 hp @ 5,700 rpm

295 lb.-ft. of torque @ 2,100-4,800 rpm

Transmission

Eight speed torque converter automatic

Configuration

Transverse front engine/FWD/AWD

Dimensions

Wheelbase 109.2

Length 182.8 inches

Width 74.4 inches

Height 67.4 inches

Ground clearance 9.1 inches

Track (f/r) 64.3/62.4 inches

Weight 4,234 pounds

Fuel capacity 18.5 gallons

Cargo capacity 62.4 cubic feet

Max Trailer weight 4,400 pounds

Turning circle 38.4 feet

Co-efficient of drag 0.35

Performance

0-60 mph 6.07 seconds

50-70 mph 3.39 seconds

50-70 mph (up 6-7 % grade) 4.95 seconds

Top speed-Well into triple digits and who really cares anymore

Fuel economy EPA rated 20/27/22 mpg city/highway/combined. Expect 22-23 mpg in rural country/suburban driving and 30 mpg on a level highway at legal speeds.

Volvos are great looking vehicles especially the new XC60, XC90 and S90. Smooth soft lines have lots of muscle built in. Just look at the shoulders on this XC60. Its strong front end and smooth transitions highlight its perfect proportions along with a superb window/cabin line. It is one curvaceous ride now a far cry from its historical start mentioned above. About the only four-sided design input is the traditional Volvo grille which resembles a soft rectangle. One of the beauties of its design is that it is quite sophisticated in its shape without

being complicated. In other words, there are not a lot of useless lines to crap it up.

Now to its "2" liter powerplant. This is no ordinary turbocharged four banger, but follows in the footsteps of some great aviation radial engines which were both mechanically supercharged and turbo charged so the engine could still develop sea level horsepower at high altitudes. While this Volvo won't see the altitudes of a B-17 or P-47, my Volvo ride did climb to about 7,400 feet with no loss of its massive performance.

This little DOHC, 16 valve mill with its high compression (10.3:1) and two blowers belts out 302 hp at just 5,700 rpm and 295 pounds of twist from 2,100 to 4,800 rpm. Hook that up to a swift/slick shifting eight speed torque converter auto cog swapper and this thing will rocket to 60 mph in a miniscule 6.07 seconds. If that isn't quick enough, then how about 50-70 mph simulated passes in 3.39 seconds and that same task up a 6-7 percent grade happens in less than five seconds (4.95 to be exact). Because of the instantaneous response of a supercharger, there is absolutely NO turbo lag. None, zero, zip, nada. In fact, this engine is so responsive, an unprepared strong tip in will snap a few necks. Hit the gas and you are in the next county. If you want to view this technical marvel, Volvo has the best hood release system in the business. Your mechanic will love you for this. But then again, as to looking at an engine, do you know anyone who drives with their hood open? I certainly do not.

And with all-wheel drive there is no wheelspin or torque steer as would be a FWD model. AWD is a must for the XC60, even if you live in Palm Springs. It improves most everything about the drive and handling.

A couple of points. First this is not the best sounding four, under load at below 2,000 rpm it was a bit coarse sounding almost diesel like. And that can be exacerbated by the manual

mode of this slick tranny which allows you to control it like a true manual. I know of no other auto that allows such complete control in manual. It is a sequential manual and whatever gear you select; it will stay in that gear until a stop when it will shift back to first gear. But if you select eighth gear going up a grade, it will not downshift if it lugs and then you will notice the coarseness when rpms drop off to 1,500 or so. Top gear is designed for fuel economy as the engine spins just 1,900 rpm at 70 mph, but going up a steep grade it needs seventh or sixth gear which are not quite as tall. Most people will operate in "D" and this never becomes an issue. The aggressively programmed tranny (designed to up shift quickly) will keep your ride smooth and quiet. This is really a non-issue. I prefer the way Volvo set up this XC60.

Fuel economy is actually good. EPA numbers show 20/27/22 mpg in city/highway/combined regime. But as usual, at a steady 70 mph on cruise control XC60 returned solid 30 mpg. Overall it averaged 22 mpg and on a round trip to South Lake Tahoe and back to Placerville it averaged exactly 25 mpg. Five years ago it would be considered a fuel miser, but today it's about average, but remember its performance is top of the class. And while its size is diminutive, it still tips the scale at a healthy 4,234 pounds. It's larger 18.5-gallon fuel tank will outlast your tank on road trips.

Handling is very good as XC60 uses state of the art four-wheel independent suspension with 20X8 inch alloys shod with wide 255/45 series tires. XC60 has oodles of grip and when coupled with limited body roll, it goes around corners like a sporty sedan. Steering has a slightly numb feeling which means more driver attention is necessary when pushing the XC60 hard, but it will willingly comply to your commands. It will surprise most drivers.

Ride is on the firm side. There is no float and little head tossing. But it is a smooth mover swallowing the worst road conditions with aplomb. There is no wind or

road noise and when the tranny is left to do its job without human interference, the engine is smooth and quiet.

Volvo is second to none when it comes to safety. About every safety acronym ever thought of is standard. It was first in automatic braking about 10 years ago and safety continues as its prime objective. Low speed collision avoidance is standard with City Safety and Collision Warning with Full Auto Brake that comes with the Advance package (\$2,500). It also comes with Lane Departure Warning, laser cruise control, Active High beams and so much more. Xenon headlights were fantastic with a wide flat low beam and a broad distance high beam.

And then there is the interior. Volvo leathers are about the thickest and softest in the industry with some of the most comfortable accommodations in the business. There have been many instances where Volvo front seats have been found attached to an office chair pedestal. Rear seating is copious for three with excellent shoulder and leg room. Instrumentation is complete, the tach is a bit small and controlling the trip computer was difficult, but it did have a gallons per hour meter which was fun to play with. The center stack was especially clean and easy to use.

Cargo capacity behind the front row is over 62 cubic feet, about average for this group of CUVs but more than ample for most Home Depot or Lowe's runs.

Pricing is surprisingly inexpensive on a relative basis in that this near luxo or luxo ride XC60 T6 starts at \$46,350 plus \$995 for the boat from Ghent, Belgium, its final assembly factory. A majority of its parts come from Sweden or Belgium, except the eight speed tranny is from Japan. My ride had three option packages totaling about \$5,400. It had a charge of \$560 for the fancy paint and the bargain of \$350 for the larger 20 inch wheels. It totaled \$53,555, all in. If you are thinking German or Japanese luxo CUVs, you need to look at Volvo.

Larry Weitzman has been into cars since he was 5 years old. At 8 he could recite from memory the hp of every car made in the U.S. He has put in thousands of laps on racetracks all over the Western United States.

Local governments can't collect taxes from online travel firms

By Maura Dolan and Hugo Martin, Los Angeles Times

In a loss for local governments, the California Supreme Court decided Monday that online travel companies such as Expedia Inc. are exempt from paying hotel occupancy taxes.

The ruling came in one of several lawsuits filed by California cities and counties against the online firms, including Hotwire Inc. and Priceline.com.

The local governments have been attempting to get the firms to pay hundreds of millions of dollars in back taxes.

Lawyers for the government argued the tax should be based on the total amount the companies collect from consumers, not the lower dollar figure the hotels receive. Cities and counties wanted the online sites to pay the difference.

Read the whole story

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

- TRPA's offices will be closed Dec. 23-Jan. 2. The office will reopen Jan. 3, but the front counter, which is normally closed on Tuesdays, will reopen Jan 4.
 - Santa will be shredding at Sierra-at-Tahoe on Dec. 24 from 9am-4pm.
 - It should be a smoke free holiday season in the Lake Tahoe Basin. According to the U.S. Forest Service, no controlled burns will be started from Dec. 16-Jan. 1.
 - The initial study/mitigated negative declaration for the Triumph Development Hotel & Residential Project in Truckee has been amended and recirculated. Comments will be taken until Jan. 24. The documents are available **online**.
 - Will Morgan has been promoted to captain at Tahoe Douglas Fire Protection District.
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TRYP putting on 2 mixers in December

Tahoe Regional Young Professionals will host two events this month.

The South Shore Networking Mixer is Dec. 14 from 6-9pm at Echo Restaurant located inside the Lake Tahoe Resort Hotel in South Lake Tahoe. One free drink and complimentary appetizers will be provided for attendees. Attendance is free for members and \$10 for non-members.

Attendees are encouraged to bring non-perishable food items that will be donated to Bread & Broth for Kids.

The North Shore Networking Mixer is Dec. 20 from 5:30-8:30pm at Alibi Ale Works located at 204 E Enterprise St., in Incline Village. One free drink and complimentary appetizers will be provided for attendees. Attendance is free for members and \$10 for non-members.

For more info about TRYP or to become a member, email TahoeTRYP@gmail.com.

Northstar GM a veteran at ski resort



Nadia Guerriero is now vice president/general manager of Northstar.

Prior to taking the helm of the Truckee ski resort she was senior director of base area operations, village and events. Guerriero has been with Northstar since 2007.

Beth Howard, who had been GM for two years, is now COO at Beaver Creek.

“Northstar is an extraordinary mountain within the Vail Resorts family with countless opportunities. I’m excited to work closer with our incredible talent across the mountain and help take the team and the resort to the next level,”

Guerriero said in a statement.

LTCC board to mull building student housing

By Kathryn Reed

When Lake Tahoe Community College students start classes in fall 2020 they might have the option of living on campus.

This afternoon the college board will hear a presentation by representatives of Brailsford & Dunlavey about the feasibility of having residential housing at LTCC.

The company investigated what type of housing students would like on campus, if they even wanted it and then delved into different scenarios to make it a reality.

While no decision will be made at the meeting today, which starts at 4:30pm, the board is expected to vote just after the first of the year about student housing.

“For the college to financially survive, being a destination college is the right concept. To be a destination college, housing is important,” LTCC President Kindred Murillo told *Lake Tahoe News*.

About five years ago 17 percent of the students enrolled at LTCC were not from Tahoe. That percentage has grown to 41 percent.

Those students need someplace to call home while they are studying here. As the rental market has continued to be squeezed in the last several years, their options have

dwindled. A survey found nearly 66 percent of the students had a difficult time attaining housing.

While student housing might be below market rate, it will only be for students. Specific criteria would need to be figured out if the board agrees to go forward with the housing idea. Taking a certain number of units each quarter may be required, and putting a limit on the number of years allowed in the student housing could be another rule.

The consultants believe housing for about 100 students would be do-able.

The dorms are proposed to go near the phys ed building and would likely be two stories. Depending on how many it would accommodate, the structure could also go near the new university center. The smell from the South Tahoe Public Utility District is a concern behind the gym.

Students told the consultants they don't need frills. What they want is something affordable, to be able to rent just for the academic year and to have study spaces. They aren't looking for traditional apartments, but instead shared suites.

Food service is something else to be ironed out.

"We could reinstate food in the student center. I've seen some colleges provide food vouchers at the local businesses," Murillo said. "That helps local businesses and helps students get a good meal."

She said the most likely scenario is a developer will build the facility and a third party will operate it.

"We really have to look at the affordability for students. What would work cost-wise for them," Murillo said.

Opinion: Legislation could protect online reviewers

By Christopher Elliott, Washington Post

If you've never heard of a strategic lawsuit against public participation (SLAPP), consider yourself lucky.

I hadn't either until a knock at my door on a January evening seven years ago. A process server pushed an envelope into my hand. "You are being sued," a notice at the top of the document proclaimed. I felt my pulse quicken.

SLAPP lawsuits – which most often take the form of a defamation suit – are surprisingly common. They are meant to burden individuals with the cost of a legal defense until they stop their criticism. They affect travelers disproportionately, in large part because travelers' opinions have the power to raise the fortunes of a hotel or restaurant – or to put them out of business.

Last year, for example, roughly 2,500 TripAdvisor users removed their reviews because they were being harassed by businesses they had rated, according to the site. It's not known how many disrupted reviews resulted in lawsuits.

Read the whole story

8 billion gallons of water fill Tahoe in 2 days

Lake Tahoe could reach its natural rim by the end of the week.

The storms that blew through Dec. 9-10 brought 8,690,131,707 gallons of water to the lake. That is 26,669 acre-feet.

The natural rim is 6,223 feet. As of Dec. 11, the lake level was at 6,222.97 feet. The last time the lake was at its natural rim was in mid-September.

The National Weather Service in Reno has issued a winter weather advisory for the basin from 10am Tuesday to 4am Wednesday. A couple of inches of snow may fall at lake level, with a foot possible above 8,000 feet. This storm will bring strong winds.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

- All South Lake Tahoe fire stations have barrels for people to drop off toys for Christmas Cheer.
- South Lake Tahoe's offices on Tata Lane will be closed during the noon hour from Dec. 12-Feb. 17.
- The Douglas County Public Library in Minden will be closed Dec. 24-26, the Zephyr Cove branch will be closed Dec. 24-27.

- Never Summer snowboards will be available to demo at Sierra-at-Tahoe on Dec. 17-18 from 8am-3:30pm at the Solstice Plaza.

- Soroptimist International of Tahoe Sierra's Elegant Evening will be April 22 from 5:30-10:30pm at Harrah's. The auction is already live **online**. Tickets are \$65; \$75 after April 1.