

Road Beat: Kia Sorento SXL – smooth operator



Kia Sorento handles well and is comfortable to drive.
Photos/Larry Weitzman

By Larry Weitzman

Many auto people think that Hyundai and Kia are basically twins and therefore one would think that the Kia Sorento is the identical twin to the Hyundai Santa Fe. While they may share “hearts” in the form of the powertrain, it ends there. In fact, the Sorento is 6 inches shorter and rides on a 1-inch shorter wheelbase. Sorento is a small midsize at just 187 inches on a 109-inch wheelbase. Width is broad in the shoulders at 74 inches. Sorento’s AWD system only adds 133 pounds to its weight.

While the design of the Santa Fe is edgy, the new Sorento has

a softer, smoother rounded surface without any sharp lines, except for a scallop in the rear rocker area. It uses the signature Kia grille and integrates its design theme from there. It is one attractive CUV. About the only "average" design point on the Sorento is the termination of the rear quarter window.

Under the hood resides Kia's extremely smooth and efficient 3.3L DOHC, 24 valve V-6 that cranks out 290 hp at 6,400 rpm and 252 pounds of twist at 5,300 rpm. It drives all four wheels via a 6-speed torque converter tranny. And this is one smooth and powerful powerplant. Zero to 60 mph arrives in just 7.02 seconds. Its responsiveness is linear and eager. Passing times are also quick with a 50-70 mph simulated pass requiring 3.85 seconds and the same simulation up a steep grade only slowing that time to 6.18 seconds. That is getting down the road for a 4,343-pound vehicle. It is rated to tow 5,000 pounds when properly equipped. The gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) is a whopping 5,622 pounds giving the Sorento a huge 1,300-pound payload.

As an aside, Sorento also has two other engine choices, a 2.4L inline 4 with 185 hp and 178 pounds of twist. It is also found in the Optima where it performs beautifully, but might be a bit anemic in the Sorento. While the window sticker may reflect better fuel economy, I doubt it is any better than the V-6 as you will read in the following paragraph. The other choice is a 2.0L turbo (240 hp, 260 pounds of twist) which I found to do a very good job with respect to performance and fuel economy in a smaller CUV model (Santa Fe Sport) which you may have read. I also tested the 2.0L turbo in last year's Sorento and the test results show almost identical passing performance with acceleration to 60 mph about half a second slower. But here is the deal, fuel economy was superior with the V-6 by as much as four mpg on the Tahoe trip and at least two mpg on the highway at 70 mph. So I suggest that you go with the V-6 if possible but the 2.0L turbo four might be a

good choice as well. The V-6 is a \$1,600 upgrade over the 2.0L turbo.



Specifications

Price \$25,400 to \$45,700

Engine

3.3L DOHC, 24 valve V-6 290
hp @ 6,400 rpm

252 lb-ft of torque @ 5,200
rpm

2.0L DOHC, 16 valve, turbo
charged inline 4 240 hp @
6,000

260 lb-ft of torque
1,450-3,500 rpm

2.4L DOHC, 16 valve inline 4
185 hp @6,000 rpm

178 lb-ft of torque @ 4,000
rpm

Transmission

Six speed automatic with
manual mode

Configuration

Transverse mounted front
engine/FWD/AWD

Dimensions

Wheelbase 109.4 inches

Length 187.4 inches

Width 74.4 inches
Height 66.5 inches
Track (f/r) 64.1/64.5 inches
Weight 4,343 pounds
GVWR 5,622 pounds
Weight Distribution (f/r)
59/41
Fuel capacity 18.8 gallons
Tow capacity 5,000 pounds
Steering lock to lock 2.9
turns
Turning circle 36.4 feet
Wheels (std/opt)
17X7.0/19X7.5 alloys
Tires
(std/opt)235/65X17/235/60X18
/235/55X19
Interior volume (2nd row
up/down, 3rd row up)
38.0/73.0/11.3 cubic feet
Performance
0-60 mph 7.02 seconds
50-70 3.85 seconds
50-70 mph uphill 6.18
seconds
Top speed governed at 130
mph
Fuel economy EPA rated
17/23/19 mpg
city/highway/combined.
Expect 23-24 mpg in rural
and suburban driving and 32
mpg on a level highway at
legal speeds.

Fuel economy is rated by EPA testing at 17/23/19 mpg city/highway/combined. But I don't know if the EPA pulled a

plug wire or whether they left the emergency brake on, but the lowest fuel economy recorded by the Road Beat was 21.6 mpg in heavy freeway traffic much of it stop and go and during some full throttle performance testing. Overall the Sorento averaged 23-24 mpg. On the highway at 70 mph on a two way run on level ground 31.9 mpg. During a round trip from Placerville to South Lake Tahoe which includes a 6,000-foot climb over the Sierras the Sorento averaged 26.6 mpg. The fuel tank is a large 18.8 gallons.

As to handling the chassis is state of the art MacPherson struts up front and a multilink system in the rear and those broad shoulders allow for a wide stance of 64 inches of track. Rolling gear are 19 x 7.5 inch alloys shod with wide 235/55 series rubber. Steering is just under three turns lock to lock and it does a 360 degree turn within 37.2 feet. Sorento actually corners with aplomb with great grip and accurate steering albeit a bit numb. It just means it requires more attention when doing the cha-cha in the tight twisties. But it clearly has good cornering power, far more than most drivers will ever demand. It is a real pleasure to drive. Impressive.

Now here is where it gets good. Sorento is one of the smoothest and quietest CUVs on the planet. It was noticeable on my first drive. It became a magic carpet. It ran as if the engine was off, ethereal. It's that good. It handles bumps in a sublime, well controlled manner. One of the best rides I have encountered. As to quiet, one must think in a whisper while in the Sorento, there is no engine, wind or road noise except when under full throttle acceleration and then the smooth V-6 emits a mild, pleasant roar, not bad for a V-6. But again this 3.3L unit is one of my favorite engines manufactured today.

Braking performance is strong from its huge disc brakes (over a foot in diameter ventilated fronts). And it has a standard autonomous emergency braking system which is new for 2017. Of course it has most every conceivable safety acronym including

adaptive front head lights all standard. About the only thing it didn't have was a lane keeping assist, but it did have lane departure warning, again all standard on the SXL model.

On the inside is another winning interior. This is a luxury ride with gorgeous nappa perforated leather seats, soft touch materials everywhere else, on the doors, dash and center console. The seats are done in a dark charcoal on the side trim with the faces being covered in a cream leather with deep bolstering. They are comfortable. I thought about grabbing one for my office chair. Shoulder room is almost 60 inches giving the interior an extremely spacious feel. Cargo capacity is good size at 73 cubes behind the front chairs and 38 feet behind the second row and almost 12 cubes behind the third row.

The instrument panel has all the instrumentation, trip computer, speedo, tach and ancillary gauges. The center stack is well done with a big screen info center for the radio, nav and other info. Operation of the systems is intuitive, simple and tastefully done.

Did I like the Sorento? You bet. Pricing for this Best in class and top of the line ride Sorento SXL starts and ends at \$45,700 plus \$895 for the train and truck from West Point, Georgia assembly plant. Even the floor mats are standard equipment. Such a deal.

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.

Bargains await the smart traveler in 2017

By Jack Chang, Sacramento Bee

Change likely will define 2017 in many ways, and the travel industry is no outlier in that forecast.

Airlines, as they occasionally do, will look for new revenue streams by going extra-budget. Cities will continue building their allure through their food and drink cultures. More private homes will welcome guests in more cities as Airbnb forges stronger partnerships with local governments.

That's at least how CSU Chico Professor Matthew Stone sees this new year shaping up. As an expert in recreation, hospitality and parks management, Stone identified several travel trends that point to more options for the smart bargain hunter.

[Read the whole story](#)

WCSO taking signups for Citizen Corps

The Washoe County Sheriff's Office Citizen Corps is offering an emergency preparedness and response training academy beginning Jan. 19. The training is free and trainees are not required to become a Citizen Corps volunteer to participate.

The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Academy provides residents with the information they need to help save lives

and reduce trauma in the event of an emergency. CERT Academy training includes disaster preparedness, emergency medical techniques, fire safety, light search and rescue, disaster psychology, and terrorism awareness education.

The CERT Academy offers six training sessions over two consecutive weekends.

Academy dates are:

Jan. 19 6-9pm, Jan. 20 6-9pm and Jan. 21 8:30m-4pm.

Jan. 26 6-9pm, Jan. 27 6-9pm and Jan. 28 9am-4pm.

Training takes place at the Regional Public Safety Training Center located at 5190 Spectrum Blvd., Reno.

To sign up for training, call 775.325.6928 or email srhodes@washoecounty.us.

TOCCATA WinterFest event in early January

TOCCATA – Tahoe Symphony Orchestra & Chorus' 12th WinterFest kicks off with BRRRoque Masters.

Performances are Jan. 4, 7pm at St. Patrick's Episcopal Church-Incline Village; Jan. 6 at 7pm at St. Theresa Catholic Church-South Lake Tahoe; Jan. 7 at 3:30pm at Shepherd of the Sierra Lutheran-Carson City; and Jan. 8, 3:30pm at Good Shepard Lutheran Church-Reno.

Tickets are available **online**.

Vetting casino games takes team of techies

By Thomas Moore, Las Vegas Sun

Jim Barbee stood in the Gaming Control Board's technical lab, a small utilitarian room filled with slot machines and video poker games blinking away, some with the doors open and their bill changers, video screens, slot reels and electronic guts on display.

"The first two things you learn when you work here are one, how to turn off the sound," Barbee said. "And the second, is to make sure you get your money out when you're done. If you leave it in, it's gone and goes to the office doughnut fund. We haven't had any doughnuts around here for a while."

Barbee is chief of the board's technical division, which has a number of roles when it comes to Nevada's gaming regulations. One of them is approving new games and modifications to existing casino games.

As part of that process, they have to examine the games and run them through their paces. Hence the room full of various slots and video games.

Read the whole story

New Year vision from Tahoe residents-agencies

Lake Tahoe News asked a variety of people and agencies in the Lake Tahoe Basin to talk about what their resolutions, so to speak, are for 2017. Here are the responses:

John Rice, general manager of Sierra-at-Tahoe: “We are hoping for another ‘normal’ winter of 450 plus inches of snow, followed by a nice wet spring to put water back in our lake, give our thirsty forest a drink and keep the bark beetles at bay. We would also like a minimum of 30 powder days in 2017 please! We don’t ask for much.”

Andy Wirth, president and CEO, Squaw Valley Ski Holdings LLC: “Professionally: A complete reboot and reestablishment of folks being civil, polite, courteous, gracious, cordial and respectful to each other and reverential of diverse opinions – globally, nationally, state-wide, regionally and locally. Personally: Lots of time spent on our horses with my daughter and a great outcome for her 4H steer project at the Nevada and then Placer County fairs!”

Brandi Ledbetter Brown, owner of Tahoe Production House in South Lake Tahoe: “I am looking forward to watching my new business laikastream.com launch, be involved in the community as much as I can with Tahoe Regional Young Professionals – big things are coming, and watch my daughter grow up in this beautiful place we call home. If you can make it in Tahoe, you can make it anywhere!”



Lake Tahoe in 2017



Jer ry Goodman, longtime South Lake Tahoe resident: “To see the reduction of vacation home rentals in our residential neighborhoods and lots more snow.”

Suzanne Kingsbury, El Dorado County Superior Court judge: “In terms of a personal wish, it is that all of Tahoe’s citizens – as well as my friends, coworkers and family – have a healthy and happy 2017. From the perspective of my agency, we hope for less repeat customers! And if I could get through the year without having any dental work, that would be a blessing. Sorry Dr. Gordon, but I prefer to see you outside your office.”

Evon J. Yakar, rabbi Temple Bat Yam: “In 2017, I am looking forward to great ways to strengthen our Tahoe community through economic opportunities and social justice efforts. On a global scale, I am hopeful that our human values of equality and care for the Earth will be held in high regard.”

Duane Wallace, South Tahoe Chamber of Commerce president: “I’m hoping that the two chambers will find some common ground. I’m hoping that real progress will be made so that those who work here or grew up here will be able to afford to live here.”

Todd Offenbacher, founder of Tahoe Adventure Film Festival: “My new year’s resolution is to make Tahoe better through more community events and activities that connect us and our guest (visitors) to the outdoors. I want to see more rock climbing, mountain trails, bike paths, exploration, and adventures for everyone. Plus, we need more parking for this recreation in Tahoe.”

Tim Alameda, Lake Tahoe Fire Protection District chief: “1. Biggest and best Firefighters Ball ever – held on March 10, 2017 at Edgewood

2. Only free range organic eggs at this year’s Easter Egg hunt at Tahoe Paradise Park

3. A celebration of remembrance for the 10-year anniversary of the Angora Fire – June 24, 2007

4. Please, no illegal fireworks during the 4th of July ... how about for the whole summer

5. Sept. 11 – Never Forget

6. Oct. 13 – Anniversary of Chief Alameda’s first year at Lake Valley Fire and the anniversary of the Emerald Fire

7. Thanksgiving – do not try the fried turkey routine in your garage

8. Lake Valley Fire’s Christmas Engine makes its rounds. See you then, here comes 2018!

9. Everyone have a safe and fun 2017 and hike Mt. Tallac, at least once!”

Ellie Waller, Tahoe Vista resident and local activist: “Tahoe specific: Real agency – local jurisdictions as well as TRPA – transparency with more clarity in code of ordinance, goals and policies and not subjective interpretation that is tailored to an outcome. Actual public participation: Example, the environmental groups and members of the public that consistently come to meetings are not necessarily represented by the League to Save Lake Tahoe’s views when it comes to compromise with developers.”

Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board staff: “1. Working collaboratively with stakeholders to adapt to climate change by creating more resilient watersheds, conserving and recycling water and protecting infrastructure from flooding.

2. Continuing to support Caltrans and local government efforts to reduce stormwater pollutants from entering Lake Tahoe through stormwater treatment and road sweeping.

3. Ensuring clean surface and groundwater is available to all users, including disadvantaged communities.

4. Supporting private-public partnerships in tackling aquatic invasive species and near shore water quality concerns. The Lake Tahoe marina association is setting the example in working with Lahontan, Tahoe Resource Conservation District, League to Save Lake Tahoe and TRPA to tackle these issues.

Nevada Department of Transportation staff: “As 2016 ends, preliminary data tragically shows approximately 32 deaths on Nevada roads. In 2017, the Nevada Department of Transportation and partners will continue work to save lives on Nevada roads, from enhanced enforcement of traffic laws to roadway improvements such as the shared use path and safety enhancements under construction on Highway 28 near Incline Village. With the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reporting that approximately 94 percent of

traffic deaths are the result of driver behavior, the top wish for the new year is for lives saved thanks to continued safety efforts and everyone on the road being safer and more attentive.”

Clint Purvance, CEO and president Barton Health: “My hope is to find additional and innovative ways to meet the health and wellness needs of our community. Barton oncology will begin seeing patients as a member of UC Davis’ Cancer Care Network, work will finish on the expanded Women’s Health Suite at Medical Imaging, and the Robert Maloff Center of Excellence will open and begin serving our community and patients. We are taking big steps in 2017 toward our commitment to our community’s health, and wellness will continue to be top of mind as we shape our future.”

Molly Hucklebridge Coolidge, South Lake Tahoe resident: “In 2017, I want to prioritize spending time with positive, genuine, and loving people. I also hope to be considered a strong advocate for peace on our planet and for preservation of our natural surroundings.”

Jeff Marsolais, Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit forest supervisor: “Beyond hoping for a happy and healthy 2017 for all, looking forward, I’d like to continue to expand the collaborative efforts between agencies, partners, communities, and interested citizens to tackle the challenges of the basin like improving forest resiliency and providing for sustainable recreation. I am hopeful we can do so while engaging our local and visiting public, involving and inspiring our youth, and visioning for a future we will be proud to say we had a small part in shaping.”

Rosie Borges – 1929-2016



Rosie Borges

Rosie Borges, known by most in South Lake Tahoe as Mrs. Rosie, passed away in her sleep on Dec. 24, 2016. She was 87.

She was born Rosie Perreira Luis in Kings County, Cali., July 10, 1929. While growing up in Stratford, Calif., she had memories of hand milking cows with her seven siblings every morning and every afternoon. She left the farm, and gladly the milking chore, when her father, Franklin, passed in 1933.

Rosie graduated Lemoore High School in 1949 as the top female student of the year. She played lead trumpet in the marching band. At 5-feet-4-inches-tall, she was the female basketball player of the year.

In 1949, Rosie and Sam Borges were married in Las Vegas. Early in her marriage Rosie worked as a nurse in Lemoore, Calif. She continued her athletic prowess in city league fast pitch softball until she rushed home plate while six months pregnant with Don.

In 1955 the Borges family moved to San Jose. Sam sold tractors for Allis Chalmers and Rosie worked as a Crossing Guard for San Jose Unified School District. On weekends they competed in

waterski speed racing. Rosie was a United States National Champion speed water skier in the early 1960s.

A family business of cutting cord wood allowed the growing family to save up to move to Tahoe. In about 1959 Sam designed and built a wood splitter that would process a standing tree to stacked cord in the truck in one hour. Using his boys as labor and Rosie as the splitter operator, the family averaged 200 cords of wood/year, split, delivered and stacked for \$36.36/cord.

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The Borges family happily made the move to Lake Tahoe, the "All Year Playground" in 1965. Rosie operated Rosie's Waterski School in the summer and worked with Sam and their sons at Borges Sleigh Rides in the winter.

"Miss Rosie" was the Crossing Guard for the Lake Tahoe Unified School District and the city of South Lake Tahoe. For 20 years, with a perfect record of no student injuries, she safely crossed students at the intersection of Lyons Avenue and Lake Tahoe Boulevard. She also attended South Tahoe High School Viking sports for 50 years.

After retiring, Rosie enjoyed many years of daily water aerobics exercises with the "Tahoe Keys Ladies."

Sam and Rosie were both first generation Americans. They traveled to the Portugal mainland where Sam found his father and with niece Kathleen. They were able to locate and visit her family in the Azores Islands.

Rosie leaves four sons Dean, Don, David and Dwight, many grandchildren and great-grandchildren. She will be greatly missed by all who knew and loved her.

The celebration of life will be celebrated privately with family.

In lieu of flowers or gifts, please light a candle and celebrate the wonderful life and example Rosie left to her family and our community.

If you have a "Miss Rosie" story, please comment below.

Curt Amacker – 1959-2016



Curt Amacker

Lifelong South Lake Tahoe resident Curt Amacker died Dec. 25, 2016. He was 57.

Curt was born July 23, 1959, in Carson City

He lived in South Lake Tahoe his entire life, other than a short time while attending tech school in Phoenix.

Curt was an avid outdoorsman who loved the mountains, riding

ATVs and snowmobiles, shooting his prized firearms, and sitting around a bonfire visiting with his friends and family.

Curt is survived by his parents, Cass and Virginia; sons, Adam and Matt (Amy); grandson, Ryder; brothers Mike and Cass (Debbie); many other relatives, friends; and his faithful four-legged companion, Rowdy.

There will be a celebration of life at a later time.

Road Beat: Honda Ridgeline almost all new in '17



Honda Ridgeline 2017 is worth the wait. Photos/Larry Weitzman

By Larry Weitzman

Starting in model year 2006, the first-generation Honda Ridgeline enjoyed a long nine-year run through 2014 to be replaced by an almost entirely new vehicle in model year 2017. There was no 2015 or 2016 model. This new second generation 2017 Ridgeline was unveiled in January 2016 and production commenced in May of this year. Was it worth the wait? You bet it was and you can take that to the bank.

Almost everything is new, even more that 50 percent of the chassis is all new, something not usually done in American trucks. First the new truck while based on the new Pilot as was the old Ridgeline, has a new curvaceous, smoother, more purposeful body. It is now a great looking ride, not like the three, distinct box design of the prior Ridgeline. Everything about this new Ridgeline is integrated with lines flowing throughout the body. It looks slicker and it is with a 15 percent reduction in co-efficient of drag and an overall 18 percent reduction in vehicle running resistance.

Wheelbase is up three inches to 125 inches and overall length at 210 inches has grown by the same amount. It still stands 71 inches tall but it is a bit wider by almost an inch, now a broad shouldered 78.6 inches. Track is still a super wide 66 inches.

Finally, while lighter by about 100 (down to 4,431) pounds, the new Ridgeline through the use of more advanced materials is stronger with a 28 percent increase in torsional rigidity and tighter sealing, meaning a much quieter ride, improved handling and more comfort. But we are just beginning here.

Under the hood is essentially the same slightly undersquare 3.5L V-6 engine, but with plenty of changes. First and most important is direct injection which increases engine output and fuel economy simultaneously. It has other changes in variable cylinder management cylinder deactivation (running on

less than six cylinders), drive by wire and a new, higher 11.5:1 compression ratio (up a point and a half). The bottom line is now 280 hp at 6,000 rpm and 262 pounds of peak twist at 4,700 rpm, up by 30 hp and 15 pounds respectively. Also new is a six-speeder auto cog swapper replacing the older five speed unit, helping both performance and fuel economy. It's a smoothie, but it hunts a bit.



Specifications

Engine

3.5L SOHC, 24 valve, direct injected V-6 280 hp @ 6,000 rpm

262 lb.-ft. of torque @ 4,700 rpm

Redline 6,800 rpm

Transmission

Six-speed torque converter auto transmission

Configuration

Transverse mounted front engine/FWD/AWD

Dimensions

Wheelbase 125.2 inches

Length 210.0 inches

Width 78.6 inches

Height 70.8 inches

Track (f/r) 66.0/66.1 inches

Ground clearance 7.3 inches
Fuel capacity 19.5 gallons
Weight (FWD/AWD) 4,242/4,431
Weight Distribution
57.6/42.4
Max payload 1,584 pounds
GVWR 6,015 pounds
Bed Length 64.0 inches
Wheels 18X8 inch Alloys
Tires 245/60X18
Steering lock to lock 3.0
turns
Turning circle 40.8 feet
Tow capacity (FWD/AWD)
3,500/5,000 pounds
Performance 0-60 mph 6.65
seconds
50-70 mph 3.55 seconds
50-70 mph uphill 5.06
seconds
Top speed Does anyone care,
but way beyond sane
Fuel economy EPA rated (AWD)
at 18/25/21
city/highway/combined.
Expect 26 mpg in rural
suburban driving

As to straight line performance 0-60 mph arrives in an average of 6.65 seconds, which makes the Ridgeline the quickest by far of all mid-size pickups. Passing performance backs up that number with a 50-70 mph run in just 3.55 seconds and up a steep grade (6-7 percent) only slows that time to 5.06 seconds. Throttle response is strong and linear. In comparison to the prior generation Ridgeline, the numbers were 7.73, 4.28 and 6.36 seconds respectively. Honda claims a 1.8 second improvement in 0-60 mph times. If I would have got that kind

of improvement, the new Ridgeline would have accomplished the benchmark in under six seconds. The old Ridgeline wasn't that slow and the new Ridgeline is really quick.

With all that performance, you would think it would suck gas like a full-size pickup, but it doesn't. Where other mid-size trucks get similar fuel economy to their larger full size brethren, maybe an mpg better, this Ridgeline actually gets significantly better fuel economy. Rated by the EPA at 18/25/21 mpg city/highway/combined, the Ridgeline averaged 25.2 mpg in 385 miles of testing which included all kinds of driving with very little time spent on the freeway except for its highway fuel economy test at 70 mph in which the Ridgeline averaged 31.6 mpg! Amazing for an AWD pickup. But the improvement in fuel economy becomes more dramatic when compared to the prior generation which averaged only 16.8 mpg overall and just 22.5 mpg on the highway. That's a 9-mpg pick up (no pun intended)!

In a round trip to South Lake Tahoe and back to Placerville the Ridgeline averaged 28.2 mpg and on the way up the western slope to Echo Summit of 7,382 feet it averaged 20.5 mpg during its 5,500-foot ascent. Tell Honda engineers to release the emergency brake during fuel economy testing because it seemed to average 4 to 6 mpg better than the window sticker. Fuel capacity is down a couple of gallons to 19.5.

Handling is excellent, especially considering what the Ridgeline is. It has great credentials, super wide track as mentioned above, a reasonably quick electric power steering rack (three turns lock to lock), four-wheel state of the art independent suspension, coils in all four corners, stab bars at both ends and both the front and rear systems all mounted to subframes to a rigid chassis. Wheels are 18 x 8 inches shod with 245/60 series rubber exclusive to the Ridgeline. All this adds up to agile handling with some understeer. It certainly doesn't handle like other pickups, especially full size units. Ridgeline handles much better, like a tightened up full sized

sedan. Turning circle for the Honda is just under 41 feet.

Ride quality is also car like. No rear end skipping out during cornering in the bumps. No jarring over deep, large potholes. No jiggling, even on smooth roads, as in other small pickups. Just a smooth compliant ride which probably mirrors the new generation Pilot. It is quiet on the road except for coarse roads when some tire noise intercedes. The engine spins just under 2,000 rpm at 70 mph and the cabin remains a place for introspection and solitude or maybe some good, old fashion rock or country. It is a nice place to spend time.

Safety is second to none with about every acronym ever thought of, including blind spot detection, rear cross traffic monitoring, rear camera and more. Large disc brakes over a foot in diameter with ABS, etc., are strong. LED headlights are fantastic. Of course, there are a plethora of airbags.

We are not done yet and maybe I left the best for last, the interior. The front chairs are the best ever encountered in a pickup. The shape and form densities are perfect for my average body and passengers who rode shotgun agreed as to their remarkable comfort. In my loaded Black Edition, both front seats were powered. Rear seating is almost as comfortable and roomy. I recently spent some significant time in an Avalanche which is a Suburban based vehicle now out of production, but I would rather spend time in the second row of the Ridge line. Seats are better and there is more room. That's saying something.

Instrumentation is complete with a big tach and speedo flanking an info/trip computer center. Not fancy or like a NASA inspired cockpit, but very nice and extremely legible and useable nonetheless. The center stack is reasonably easy to use but I prefer actual buttons as opposed to a touch screen system which the Ridgeline has. A very minor deficiency.

Finally, we get to the huge cargo bed. While only 64 inches

long plus the tailgate, it is deep (17 inches) and almost as wide as it is long (60 inches wide) with a scuff proof liner. It is well done and there still is the huge hidden compartment below the cargo floor. Perhaps, a consequence of that is a rubber donut spare tire, but how many times have you used a spare tire in your lifetime? Tires today are almost bullet proof.

Pricing starts for a base RT 2WD model at \$29,475. My fully loaded Black Edition AWD steps that number up to \$42,870 plus \$900 for the train/truck from its Lincoln, Ala., assembly plant. This is a fantastically versatile motor vehicle. If I had one I could sell my F-150 4X4 and RX8. For my kind of driving it would be perfect plus 25 plus mpg. This vehicle does it all and checks all the right boxes. It is by far the best non-full size pickup on the market. Its only real limiting factor is a 5,000-pound tow capacity, which it should do with ease meaning at least nice 22-foot day cruiser or a two-horse trailer, but no three horse or bigger goosenecks, leave those to the diesel duallys. This is my third Honda I have tested in three months (one was an Acura TLX, no offense) and all three were very impressive motor vehicles. Honda has really got it together.

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.

Nevada tourism guru turning

in work passport

By Susan Wood

There's no fencin' in Larry Friedman, who's retiring today from TravelNevada.

The preeminent deputy director of the Silver State agency once known as the Nevada Commission on Tourism has traveled the world to promote the state.

Now the 62-year-old Douglas County resident plans to travel for himself with family and friends. A death in the family and his own major illness in the last year spurred him to call it quits.

But to those who know and love Friedman – nothing can keep this iconoclast down. He'll continue to travel, this time for pure leisure.

"To be a father, grandfather and have my friends – I just thought I'd go out on a high note," he told *Lake Tahoe News*. "I thought about it for a long time, and my friends encouraged me to do it."

Friedman admitted the decision to leave was a dilemma for him because he loves his job.



Larry Friedman has been the backbone of TravelNevada for more than two decades. Photo/Provided

He got choked up talking about it – especially when mentioning Rural Roundup, a program he started that involves connecting the small rural communities of Nevada to the state agency’s tourism efforts around the world. The agency has spearheaded trips and promotions connecting Nevada to China, India, South Korea, France, Australia, Mexico and Brazil.

Friedman refers to these events as economically and culturally rewarding, and he has felt a total welcoming from those in the far stretches of Nevada that are often conservative pockets of the state.

“My work with rural Nevada was exceptional and so rewarding. I never felt anything but love, a partnership and warmth from these people,” he said, while holding back tears. “Being gay or straight never made a difference. I can’t speak highly enough of these people. I wasn’t judged on my sexual orientation. I was judged on purpose.”

He'll miss the people the most when he leaves his job.



Larry Friedman was a master in the travel-tourism industry.
Photo/Provided

"I made some great friendships throughout the world," he said.

Friedman also formed lifelong partnerships with agencies and companies connected to Nevada and Lake Tahoe, where he spent much of his career.

Upon leaving his childhood home in Marin County to be a foreign exchange student in Greece at age 17, he formed a close relationship with a family in Greece and has since returned for various weddings.

"The first person to repost my (TravelNevada) award is the son of my Greek brother," he said of a man who's like a brother to him.

The tourism agency just announced establishing the Larry J. Friedman Industry Partner of the Year Award to celebrate the tourism guru's lifelong commitment to these special professional and personal partnerships in the name of the

Nevada's interests.

His career certainly left a mark on Lake Tahoe and its people. Friedman came to the South Shore to work as the director of sales for Lakeland Village for a short stint in the early years.

From there, he worked for three years on the Tahoe Queen paddle-wheeler boat as the marketing director. He also worked as an overnight disc jockey and program director for five years with KTHO. He recalled how longtime radio executive Ollie Hayden gave him his first job. Hayden died a few weeks ago, marking another poignant time for Friedman.

Friedman has been with TravelNevada (or NCOT) for 26 years.

What would he tell his replacement?

"I would tell them they're very lucky – that the keys to success is to respect all of Nevada," he said.

Carson Valley Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Bill Chernock agreed with a caveat.

"Oh, they'll find someone for the job, but he will not be replaced," Chernock told *Lake Tahoe News*. "There's only one Larry Friedman. The state was lucky to have him."



Brian Krolicki, Sue Barton and Larry Friedman

Chernock recalled a special Rural Roundup, which was always celebrated near Friedman's birthday in April. For his 40th, a sheriff's deputy rounded him up to claim someone might have broken into his hotel room. When Friedman was gone, other tourism officials putting on Rural Roundup snuck in friends and Friedman's parents to stage a surprise birthday party for him.

Chernock pointed to Friedman's infectious laugh as making him so lovable.

"When Larry laughs in Carson City, dogs in Fallon say: 'Did you hear that?'" Chernock joked.

The longtime tourism official who traveled in similar circles with Friedman cited how Friedman got him his first job on the radio.

"That crummy 20-hour-a-week job at KTHO – literally everything

(related) that's happened to me in the last 32 years I attribute to that. For that, I thank him, and other days, I curse him," Chernock added.

All was in good fun for the people in Friedman's life.

Former Nevada Lt. Gov. Brian Krolicki also had memorable moments to share about Friedman.

Krolicki noted how Friedman "invented" Rural Roundup, and it grew into a major success.

"Lots of people looked forward to that," he said. This was unless one wore a tie to the event.

"If a tie was on, it was cut off. I lost more than one tie," Krolicki told *Lake Tahoe News*.



Rural Roundup is one of Larry Friedman's legacies.
Photo/Provided

When asked why he wore one knowing that standard, Krolicki responded with a chuckle: "I didn't think he'd cut off the tie of the lieutenant governor. He proved me wrong."

Krolicki further commended Friedman's dedication and passion about Nevada tourism.

"He broke barriers between professional relationships and personal friendships. His roots go very deep. He opened markets in India, Korea and China. He handled an amazing network of collaborations," said Krolicki, who served for many years on the Nevada Commission on Tourism board. "You knew Larry was in the room. He brought people together."

That's the precise impression Friedman painted for Chris Chrystal, who's retired from the NCOT.

"You always knew when Larry was in the building," said Chrystal, who worked with Friedman for 13 years. "Larry has been a great salesman for Nevada. He's a vivacious person who knows how to communicate a product – in this case, Nevada. He's got the expertise in talking to crowds. He's at ease behind the mic or in a booth at a trade show. He excelled in bringing people to Nevada."

For that, his contributions won't go unnoticed to those who work closely with Friedman.

"From his time on the radio and with the Tahoe Queen to TravelNevada, he's been so passionate about his work and travel, and it's been so advantageous to us," said Carol Chaplin, Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority executive director.

"Larry is part of a big hospitality family here. He's fun to be around. We all love him. We're going to miss him – but on to another venture," she said.

Not only did Chaplin hang in the same tourism agency circles, the two of them also worked on board the Queen.

That's where LTVA's Senior Vice President of Administration and Operations Sue Barton got to know Friedman, a year after watching him carry the Olympic torch at Lake Tahoe on its way to the 1984 Summer Games in Los Angeles.

The friendship and collaboration came full circle when the torch returned to Tahoe in 2002 while on its way to Salt Lake City. Barton helped spearhead an evening event at the then Caesars Tahoe parking lot in which Friedman was the emcee.

"He brought the 1984 torch. That was a fun, full-circle experience there," she said.

Barton has traveled extensively to promote Nevada with Friedman.

"His passion about Nevada and tourism is unmatched. It's made him an incredible ambassador," she said.

Friedman will be honored on his "industry partner" award at the Rural Roundup slated for April 26-28 in Elko.