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This fall's featured vehicle is Dennis Spurgeon's 1969 Dodge Dart.

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Local racer wins Victory series with '69 Dartzilla



BY ROXIE MURPHY
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OWENSVILLE — Living in a small town usually means taking up a hobby. That hobby tends to spread as word gets out, and before long, a niche is born.

That's what happened in the 1980s when hot rod cars were daily drivers and street races on Highway Y west of Owensville started "at the Cedar tree and ended at Meyer Road," says 2019 Nostalgia Victory Series Champion Dennis Spurgeon of Rosebud. "It's a hobby, along with other guys — who are doing it as a hobby," Spurgeon said. It's not for the money, it's for the thrill of the competition and building the cars and making them perform the way we like them to."

Spurgeon's win may have legitimized his hobby to some who weren't impressed with a self-described "dabbler in weekend races" — but for Spurgeon, love of fast cars and races began when he was a young man.

"I spent a lot of time street racing, which everybody thinks is dangerous," Spurgeon said. "I started visiting drag strips, which

See **Dartzilla** page 3B

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Dartzilla • From page 2B

you have to travel to because there are few in the area. I was more comfortable as a racer there because I felt safer and they have safety measures.”

Missouri used to have several dragstrip racetracks, including those in Wentzville, Pevely, and Sullivan. Spurgeon attended and won his first dragstrip race in 1997, and won again in his second and third races. From there, Spurgeon said he was hooked.

That was 40 years ago or more when Spurgeon acquired a 1969 Dodge Dart, the first car that I ever built for drag racing only was a 1969 Dodge Dart with a 340 cubic engine. There have been a whole bunch of cars in between, but Spurgeon has moved back to the '69 Dodge Dart again.

“It’s the same kind of car I am racing today,” Spurgeon said.

The same kind of car he won the Nostalgia Victory Series with.

“I purchased my current 1969 Dodge Dart about 10 years ago,” Spurgeon said. “The purple one in the photo is what I race now.”

With a 440 cubic Chrysler engine, the car had previously been built for street racing. Spurgeon loved it, so he made it go faster.

“I went through the car from front to rear, replaced the engine with a 449 cubic

engine,” Spurgeon said. “It’s not a streetcar now in any way. I put in a roll cage, and totally set it up for drag racing.”

While he does most of the work on the car himself, he orders parts from Tom Reed at Midwest Auto and Car Quest and O’Reilly Auto Parts. Chuck Lewis at Central Tire sponsors his car by helping him keep good tires on it.

“Every aspect of the car is completely, totally gone over before each race to make sure nothing is wrong,” Spurgeon said. “You could hurt yourself or kill yourself if not.”

It’s during the offseason that he completes detailed maintenance, and fellow racers who are doing the same thing are willing to chip in helpful advice.

“We are all best buddies until the green light comes on,” Spurgeon joked.

His current racer, the Dodge Dart, was built specifically to participate in the races that he loved.

“This car is set up to race in the Nostalgia Superstock Series, which represents and glorifies the superstock cars of the 1960s, and what we run premiers on that,” Spurgeon said. “It is built per rules of the Nostalgia Victory Superstock Series along with the safety requirements of the NHRA drag racing series. We compete all around

the midwest.”

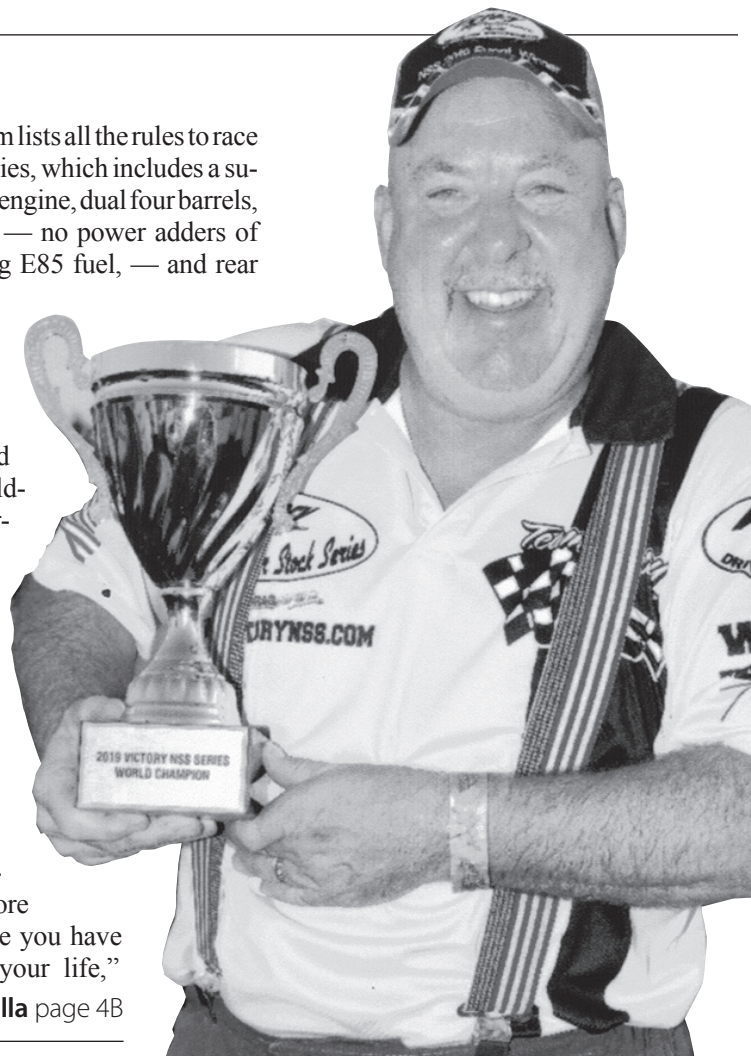
VictoryNSS.com lists all the rules to race in the Nostalgia series, which includes a superstock, big block engine, dual four barrels, gasoline fuel only — no power adders of any kind, including E85 fuel, — and rear tires must be no wider than 10.5 inches wide, just to name a few.

“Everything is manually operated to race the cars old-school style,” Spurgeon explained. “No electronics allowed whatsoever.”

No, the car is no longer street-legal, but for Spurgeon, that was never the point.

“That little quarter-mile cruise is more fun than any cruise you have ever been on in your life,”

See **Dartzilla** page 4B



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Dartzilla • From page 3B

he said.

Drag racing season begins in May and runs through September. After that, it is open as weather permits through December. That's when Spurgeon, his son Dustin Christensen, grandson Brody Christensen, Spurgeon's brother Randy Spurgeon, along with fellow local drag racers Jimmy Brandon, Michel Goggin, and James Goggin load up and set out for the races.

"Most cars in the Owensville area are in the nine and ten-second range, which includes speeds of 130 miles per hour in a quarter-mile at a standing start," Spurgeon explained. "There is so many people in our area that don't realize some of these cars are sitting in garages close to them."

Between 40 and 50 cars are pulled to drag racing tracks between Texas and Minnesota to compete in the series races. Points are accumulated at each race and add up at the final championship race.

Spurgeon described the Championship race day in September 2019 as a balmy 70 degrees.

"Every event is a two-day race," Spurgeon explained. "Most all of us spent the night at the race track in motor homes or racing trailer quarters. Like a racing camping trip with tire smoke and the sweet smell of spent racing fuel."

His friend and fellow racer Brandon, a former State Tech instructor, wrote the following:

"Going into the finals, Dennis Spurgeon was in third place in the points standing. Michel Goggin was in 12th place. It was an exciting race because there was only a 20-point spread between the number six driver and the number one driver, so the champion could be won by any of the top six drivers after a full season of racing," Brandon wrote. "So any of these drivers had a path to victory for the championship."



LOCAL DRAG race enthusiasts (from left) Randy Spurgeon, Chris Schneider, from Jefferson City race director for the series, and Dennis Spurgeon with one of Dennis' race trophies from the last five years.

Brandon said none of the Owensville area drivers had qualified very high in the order. Those from the Owensville area who were racing included himself, Randy Spurgeon, James Goggin, Michel Goggin and Brandon.

"Forty cars from all over the midwest were on hand to compete in the finals. The first round of eliminations were losses for James Goggin and Randy Spurgeon. Michel Goggin was knocked out of the number 11-points driver in the first round but fell in the second round of eliminations. Brandon met with Spurgeon in round three, where Spurgeon managed to win a close double breakout race, which also gave him by-run to the finals due to the odd number of cars. A bye run happens with a situation

See **Dartzilla** page 6B

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DENNIS SPURGEON (center, holding the trophy) in the winner's circle at St Louis Gateway Raceway, now World Wide Technology Raceway in Illinois in September 2019, surrounded by all the drivers in the Victory Nostalgia Super Stock Series.

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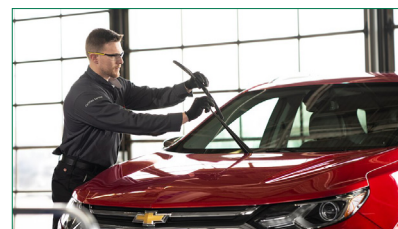
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Dartzilla • From page 4B

that arises when a driver doesn't have an opponent to run with. He then takes a solo pass to eliminate the benefit coming from a less-used engine.

Spurgeon raced Tom Hoffman, a three-time Victory Series Champion, in the finals and it was again a close double breakout race that Spurgeon took to win the event. He became the 2019 Victory Series Champion.

"That's just cool that an Owensville area guy won that," Spurgeon said about his win, driving his 1969 Dodge Dart that he named Dartzilla, the number "7" painted on top of Plum Crazy purple. The car's known number is 777.

Spurgeon tells his championship story with pizzazz.

"That particular year came down to the final race — 12 of the 40 cars were mathematically able to win the championship — the stats were tight," Spurgeon began. "When I went into the race, I was three points behind the leader and two points behind the second-place contender."

The drag race ran as a ladder where you have to keep winning rounds to make it to the finals. There were 39 cars at the final

race and everybody that was racing was watching the points.

"The more rounds you win, the more points you got," Spurgeon said. "The race ironically turned out that the top three in the points were the last three guys left. Which meant that of those three guys, whoever won the final race would win the championship."

Spurgeon said the bye-run in a semi-final gave him a free round into the final race. The guy in first won against the guy in second place in the final round. Spurgeon raced the winner and won by .006 thousandths of a second.

"It was tight," Spurgeon said. "You can see the race on YouTube at WWT2019NS-SFinals."

The race that took place at the St. Louis Gateway Raceway, now World Wide Technology Raceway in Illinois, marked Spurgeon as Owensville's first champion winner of a drag racing event since two local men campaigned two national caliber top alcohol dragsters, driven by Doug McCann and Larry Lay in the 1980s, according to Brandon. Those cars set track records and won national events.

"That legacy is still going strong," Brandon said.

Spurgeon said he would love to see more tracks in Missouri because there are so many racers who travel out-of-state to compete. He has shared his love of the hobby with his son, and last year he purchased a junior dragster for his 9-year-old grandson Brody.

This is something he will always be able to share with his boys — a hobby that goes back to his youth, that started on an open road outside of his hometown with a bunch of guys has gone further than he could ever have known.

"I still enjoy street racing," Spurgeon said. "That is a big part of American culture."



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LAST YEAR Dennis Spurgeon purchased a junior dragster for his 9-year-old grandson Brody Christensen (above). Spurgeon's son Dustin Christensen has also become addicted to the sport, racing a 1966 Plymouth Belvedere (photo left) called Bad Influence.

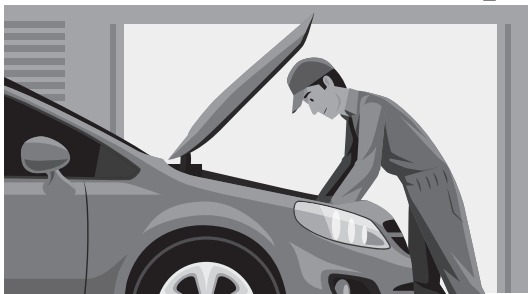
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How to effectively and safely sanitize a car

The COVID-19 pandemic changed the way people live. One readily felt effect was spending more time at home. Vehicles sat idle in driveways and even some automotive insurance providers reduced rates because people were driving much less.

Even with stay-at-home measures in place, people still need to leave their homes to stock up on essentials, such as food or medicine. In other cases, people may have been essential workers who drive for a living, including delivery drivers or health care personnel who were incapable of working from home.

Any time a person goes out in public, he or she runs the risk of contracting viruses. Bacteria and germs may reside on various surfaces, including those inside vehicles.

People want to protect themselves and now are more aware of the importance of frequently cleaning and sanitizing their cars. Keeping a vehicle safe to drive without affecting its upholstery or electronic components is paramount.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention makes a distinction between cleaning and disinfecting. Cleaning refers to the removal of germs, dirt and impurities from surfaces. It does not kill germs, but can lower their numbers. Disinfecting refers to using chemicals to kill germs on surfaces. The following are some ways to deeply clean and sanitize a car.

Wash hands

First and foremost, it is crucial to wash your hands before and after using the car. This can reduce the likelihood of growing ill because of transferred viruses or bacteria.

Use rubbing alcohol

Solutions that contain 70 percent alcohol are effective against many viruses and bacte-

ria, including coronaviruses, says the CDC. Furthermore, Jeff Stout, Executive Director of Global Innovation at Yanfeng Automotive Interiors, says that, for the most part, nearly every interior surface of a vehicle can be cleaned with isopropyl alcohol. Plastic to painted chrome to imitation leather have been tested to ensure they don't degrade when exposed to pure isopropyl alcohol.

Avoid bleach or hydrogen peroxide

While bleach and peroxide are very effective cleaners and sanitizers, they are likely to damage a car's upholstery, according to Consumer Reports.

Use soap and water

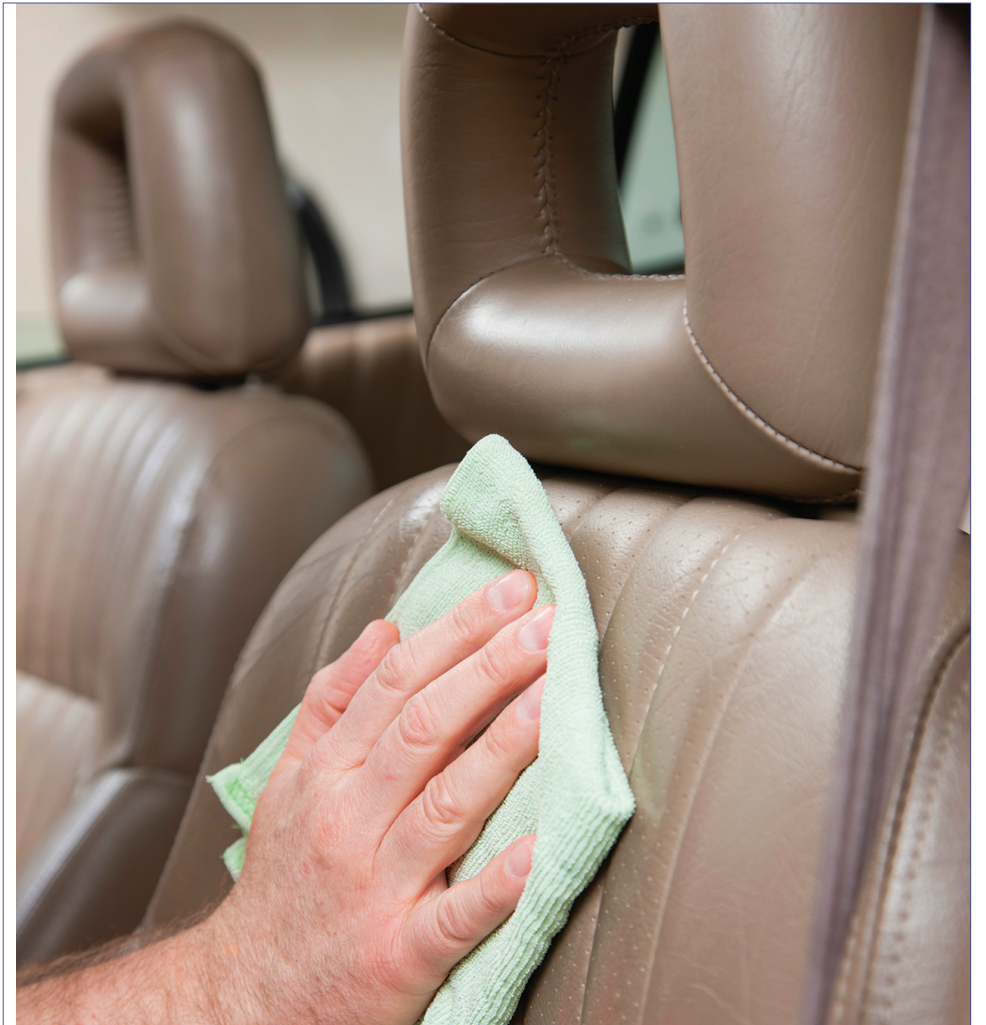
Experts say that vigorous washing with a soap-and-water solution can be effective against many contaminants because it breaks down the protective envelope that surrounds coronaviruses and other germs to disarm them. Friction also can help to break down germ cells during cleaning.

"You want to do the best with what you have, so even soap and water can chip away at the risk," says Stephen Thomas, M.D., Chief of Infectious Diseases and Director of Global Health at Upstate Medical University in Syracuse, NY.

Address frequently touched surfaces

Pay attention to the steering wheel, door handles, buttons, touchscreen displays, shift lever, and more when sanitizing. Each of these items can harbor germs.

Deep-cleaning a vehicle has become a necessity since COVID-19 emerged. Frequently cleaning and sanitizing can help make vehicles safer to operate.



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How to get a Wi-Fi enabled car

Staying connected is more important than ever, whether you're at home or on the go. Connecting to Wi-Fi is typically easy at home, but what about when you're in the car?

Wi-Fi-enabled vehicles are becoming hot commodities for drivers. There are various ways to access the internet in a car. Drivers can buy an add-on device. Even mobile gadgets that aren't specifically designed for vehicle applications can be easily connected. The devices plug into the 12-volt accessory outlet. OBD II devices connect to a car's OBD II port. This is most often located below the steering wheel. Mechanics use this port to run digital vehicle diagnostics. However, it also can be used to create a Wi-Fi hot spot with an OBD device.

Another option is to use a smartphone to create a mobile hotspot through a cellular data plan. Anyone in the car can then tether their phones or other devices to the smartphone to access the internet.

Many vehicles are now equipped with their own Wi-Fi capabilities. This means you

will not need an extra device to access the internet. However, you will probably need to sign up for an additional data plan through whatever service the car manufacturer uses to offer Wi-Fi capability or through your mobile phone carrier. AllConnect.com says Wi-Fi plans for vehicles start as low as \$10 per month and may include unlimited data. Furthermore, car Wi-Fi is often different from a mobile hotspot because it is likely to offer better connection and more security while preserving mobile data and phone battery life. Cars that are not equipped with Wi-Fi can have it as an add-on with an installed wireless vehicle router. These routers range from \$200 to \$600 and are professionally installed.

Having Wi-Fi in a vehicle is handy when taking road trips or when work requires internet connectivity. Dedicated vehicle internet can help save on mobile phone data plans and battery life. Plus, people increasingly staying at home can rely on a vehicle's Wi-Fi system as a back-up should their home internet go down.

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Technology that can make driving safer

Technology plays such a significant role in modern life that it can sometimes prove hard to ignore, even when drivers are behind the wheel. In fact, data from the National Security Council indicates that more than 700 people are injured in distracted driving crashes every day, and many of those crashes involve drivers who were distracted by their devices.

While technology can distract drivers, indirectly making the roads more dangerous as a result, the following technological advancements also can make driving considerably safer.

Backup camera

Seasoned drivers know that danger can arise at any time while driving, including when backing out of one's own driveway or even a parking spot. Backup camera technology feeds video directly to drivers' dashboards, allowing them to get a clear view of what is directly behind their vehicles. This reduces the risk of hitting anyone, including small children playing in the driveway and pedestrians on the sidewalk, when driving in reverse.



Auto emergency braking

These systems, sometimes referred to as "AEB" on dealership window stickers, alert drivers to imminent danger. AEB systems can independently brake when drivers are not responding to danger, preventing potentially deadly collisions. Systems may detect

cars both near and far, making them valuable when driving on crowded city streets as well as on highways where cars may not be so close but are driving at high speeds. AEB systems may even detect pedestrians. Some vehicles can even be equipped with rear automatic emergency braking systems, or Rear AEB, which automatically apply the brakes if sensors detect objects behind the vehicle while it's in reverse.

LED headlights

LED headlights may not inspire the awe of backup cameras or AEB systems, but they can be just as effective at making driving safer. LED headlights tend to produce greater light output than traditional headlamps, making it easier for drivers to see at night. LED headlights also last much longer than halogen bulbs, meaning they won't fade as quickly, keeping more light on the road for longer periods of time.

Autonomous cruise control

Autonomous cruise control, or ACC, systems operate in similar fashion to traditional cruise control with a key distinction. When engaged, ACC systems adjust vehicle speeds so cars and trucks maintain a safe distance from vehicles ahead of them.

Technology has forever changed the way people drive. Modern vehicles are safer than ever before thanks to technological advancements that help drivers avoid accidents in myriad ways.



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What noisy brakes may be telling you

The only noises many drivers ever want to hear coming from their vehicles are the sounds of their favorite songs blasting from their car stereos. But cars sometimes make noises that aren't nearly as inviting as music.

Noises that seem to pop up when applying the brakes can be especially scary for motorists. No one wants to drive a vehicle with faltering or suspect brakes, so learning to distinguish between the two most common brake noises can be a wise move for drivers.

Grinding brakes

The automotive retailer Pep Boys® notes that grinding noises indicate a serious problem with the braking system. According to CarsDirect.com, there are two major causes behind the grinding noise made by brakes. If the grinding sound is audible when pressing on the brake pedal, this likely because the rotor disc is coming into contact with part of the caliper. This typically occurs because the brake pads or rotors are extremely worn down, causing the steel backing of the worn out pad to grind against the rotor. In such instances, Pep Boys® recommends replacing the brake pads immediately.

If the grinding noise is audible while the vehicle is in motion, debris might be stuck inside the brakes.

Drivers might be able to dislodge this debris by repeatedly moving their cars forward and backward in a safe place, such as a driveway. If that does not work, have the brakes serviced by a qualified mechanic.

Squealing

Many drivers are familiar with the high-pitched squealing sound that comes from their vehicles or those of fellow motorists. That squeal, while certainly not music to the ears, might be a good thing. That's because Pep Boys® notes that some brake pads are equipped with small steel clips that serve as wear indicators. When brake pads have worn down, these devices produce a squealing sound to let drivers know it's time to get new brake pads.

But squealing can be indicative of other things as well. Squealing noises are sometimes heard immediately after brake pads or rotors have been replaced. In such instances, the noise typically subsides within a day or two once the pads have been broken in.

Glazed pads also can create a squealing sound. When calipers stick, the brakes stay partially applied, producing excessive friction or heat. The heat causes the brake pads to glaze.

No one wants to hear noises coming from their brakes. However, such noises are often a car's way of telling drivers that brakes need to be serviced.

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How to hit the open road during a pandemic

Fall has traditionally been a great time of year to hit the open road. Fall foliage annually provides an idyllic backdrop for fall road trips. But 2020 is a year unlike any other, and veteran road trippers may wonder if it's wise, or even legal, to take to the open road this fall.

The COVID-19 virus has forced local governments to implement various changes aimed at preventing the spread of the potentially deadly virus. While interstate travel during the outbreak is different, it's not illegal. However, many states put specific policies in place that mandated out-of-state visitors self-quarantine for a certain period time, most often 14 days. Such measures compelled many would-be travelers to remain within the borders of their home states.

But traveling need not be a relic of the past because of a pandemic. In fact, travel enthusiasts can hit the open road this fall with their peace of mind intact, especially if they follow a few safety precautions while heading off for parts unknown.

- Determine how far you really need to go. Restrictions have been lifted in many areas, but it's still most convenient for drivers to stay somewhat close to home, ideally within their own states. That makes it easy for them to buy food, gas, use a restroom, or visit a park or monument without violating the spirit of quarantine mandates. A trip need not cross borders to be fun.

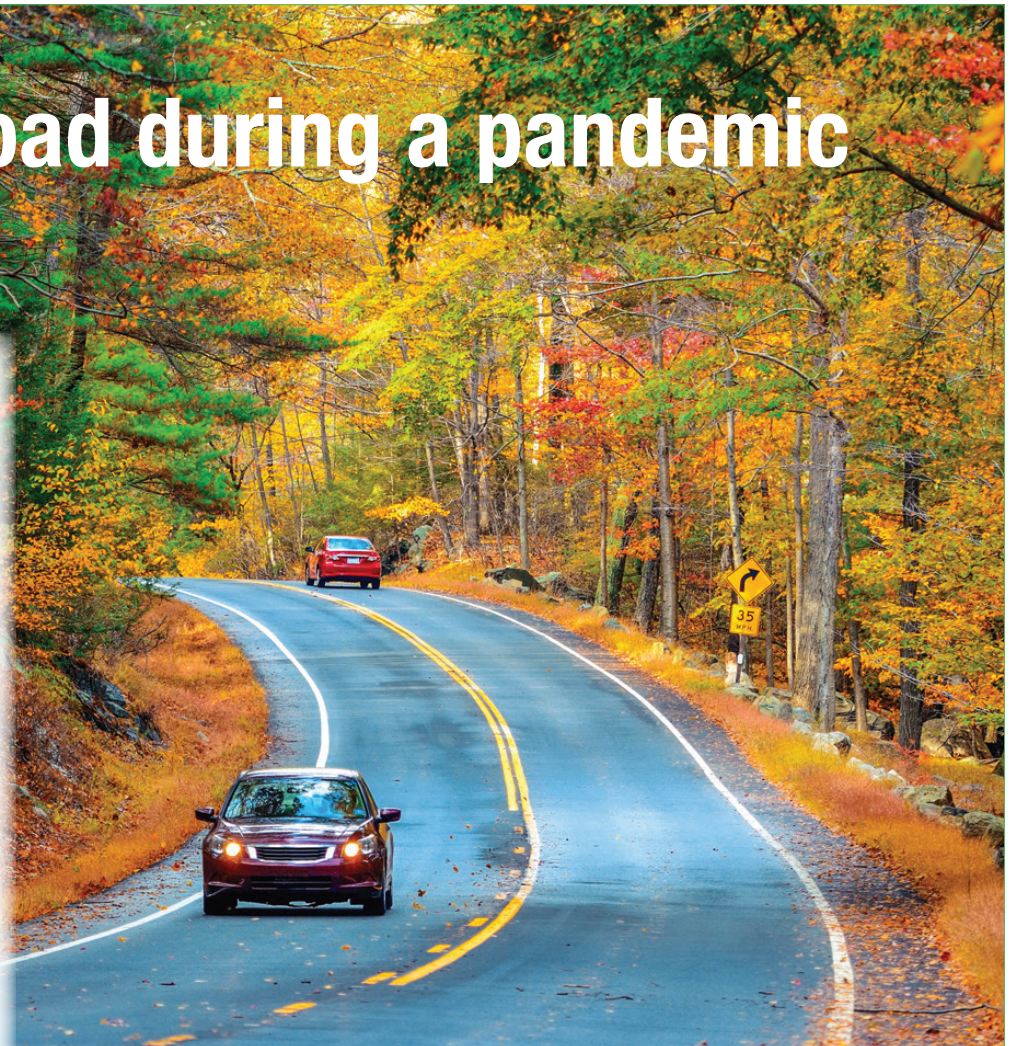
- Plan for fewer pitstops. The fewer

stops drivers make on their trips, the lower their risk of being exposed to the COVID-19 virus. In lieu of dining out during your trip, pack your lunch at home and take it with you. In addition, fill up your car before embarking on your trip so you don't have to visit the filling station while on the road. Bring enough water and snacks so you can stay hydrated and don't become hungry while out and about.

- Get a tuneup before your trip. No one wants to confront car trouble during a road trip, and that's especially so when traveling during a pandemic. A breakdown during a pandemic may force drivers to visit roadside body shops or arrange for tow trucks, potentially putting them at greater risk of getting COVID-19. Drivers should take their cars in for a tuneup before taking a road trip to lower that risk.

- Avoid densely populated areas if you intend to get out of your vehicle. If you intend to get out of your vehicle during a road trip, avoid visiting areas that tend to draw large crowds. Popular lookout points may provide some beautiful fall views, but such points also draw crowds that may exceed the limits on group gatherings recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and state health agencies.

It's possible to travel during a pandemic. But drivers must take extra precautions to reduce their risk of being exposed to potentially deadly viruses like COVID-19.



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What maintenance schedule does my car need?

Vehicle maintenance schedules vary depending on manufacturer recommendations. In addition, the way a car is driven and the environment it's driven in can dictate if routine maintenance like oil changes needs to occur more frequently or if belts and hoses need to be replaced sooner than manufacturers recommend.

Many people drive in ways that align with routine maintenance schedules. However, drivers who put excessive wear and tear on their vehicles may have to follow a "severe" maintenance schedule. According to the automotive information site Car Gurus, many manufacturers adhere to a 30-60-90 schedule, meaning certain items need to be inspected, changed or replaced at 30,000, 60,000 and 90,000 miles. Certain vehicle parts wear out at predictable intervals, while others, such as rubber gaskets, windshield washer blades and tires, will degrade at irregular intervals.

It is generally recommended to speak with a mechanic and discuss driving habits to ensure vehicles operate efficiently and



at peak capacity. The following are some conditions that may necessitate frequent maintenance.

- **Urban driving:** Stop-and-go traffic in an urban setting can wear cars out more quickly than highway driving. Experts say lubricants found in motor oil break down rapidly under these and other conditions,

including especially hot temperatures.

- **Short trips:** Frequent, short trips can take a toll on a vehicle. Again, this may be a problem for those who reside in cities or bustling suburbs. Short trips of no more than five miles can contribute to an accumulation of water vapor that dilutes motor oil and adversely affects its efficacy.

- **Heavy loads:** Advanced Auto Parts says transporting or towing heavy loads can put more wear and tear on a vehicle. Loads can include cargo or passengers.

- **Dusty or salty environments:** Dust can accumulate in air filters and clog internal engine components. Similarly, living close to the coast and salt water also can cause car parts to rust or degrade quickly.

- **Extreme temperature conditions:** People who reside in extremely cold or extremely hot climates may find that their vehicles have to work that much harder to operate, reducing the life span of automotive fluids, parts (especially car batteries) and the overall vehicle unless action is taken.

For those who frequently encounter these severe conditions,

switching to a severe maintenance schedule with the guidance of an automotive service shop can help. The added cost of more frequent fluid changes and other maintenance can be recuperated by fewer breakdowns and the reduced need for potentially costly repairs.

Did you know?

At least one automotive manufacturer has taken a cue from NASA and offers drivers what they believe to be the ultimate in passenger comfort — zero gravity seats. These seats, available on various Nissan vehicles, are designed to maximize comfort while reducing fatigue. In space there is no gravity force, so people can assume a relaxed posture that is comfortable and minimizes stress on the body. The zero gravity seats mimic that by trying to create a neutral posture position. These specially designed seats offer continuous support for the hips, pelvis, chest, and back. The cushions also flex in response to unique pressure points on the body. People who frequently take long car rides or find their body feels tired after sitting in the car for long stretches of time may benefit from zero gravity car seat technology. These seats became a new feature in 2015 on various Nissan models. Other vehicle manufacturers also may have seats that offer similar support systems.

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How to lower the cost of auto insurance

Auto insurance is a must-have for drivers. While it might seem hard to believe, as of 2019 there are still some places in the United States where auto insurance is not mandatory. Auto insurance is mandatory in Canada, though each province has its own requirements in terms of the minimum amount of coverage allowable by law.

Many people, even those in places where auto insurance is not mandatory, recognize the importance of being insured before they get behind the wheel. However, that doesn't mean those same drivers would not like to cut the cost of their auto insurance policies. A 2019 analysis from the online financial resource NerdWallet found that the average cost of car insurance in the United States is \$1,621 per year. Average insurance costs vary significantly in Canada, where data from the General Insurance Statistical Agency found that, in 2019, the average annual insurance premium in British Columbia exceeded \$1,800, while drivers in Quebec paid slightly more than \$700 annually.

No matter where drivers live, chances are they would love to lower their auto insurance costs. While there's no one-size-fits-all solution to cut auto insurance premiums, drivers

can try various strategies to save money on their policies.

- **Raise your policy's deductibles.** Higher deductibles may sound scary to drivers, but raising the deductibles is a great way to lower the cost of auto insurance. The auto insurance provider Progressive notes that deductibles typically range from \$100 to \$2,000. A driver whose policy has a \$100 deductible will pay considerably more on his policy per month than a driver with a higher deductible. In fact, the Insurance Information Institute notes that drivers who increase their deductibles from \$200 to \$1,000 can save 40 percent or more on their coverage costs. Drivers who choose this option should always be sure they have enough money in the bank to cover the cost of their deductibles.

- **Bundle your policies.** Some drivers save money on their auto insurance policies by buying two or more types of insurance from the same provider. For example, homeowners may save money by buying homeowners insurance from their auto insurance providers or vice versa.

- **Research potential discounts.** The III notes that many companies offer discounts to policyholders, even if those discounts



are not necessarily promoted. Drivers can contact their insurance companies, or shop around with other providers, to ask about various discounts that can save them money on their policies. Anti-theft devices, defensive driving courses, low annual mileage, and a strong credit record are just a handful

of the many potential discounts drivers may be eligible for.

Drivers can reduce the cost of their auto insurance policies in various ways, potentially saving themselves hundreds of dollars each year as a result.

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Five convenient tech features you want in your vehicle

Technology has dramatically changed the way people live, and has increasingly changed how they drive as well. While power windows were once coveted as high-tech features, the sophisticated technology available in modern cars and trucks can make earlier tech seem like child's play.

While some vehicle technology is designed to keep you safe, other tech is all about comfort and convenience. The following are five options to consider when purchasing your next vehicle.

1. Telematics

Telematics is a system that can remotely monitor many components of a vehicle's diagnostics and driver behavior. While this telecommunications technology already is implemented in delivery, towing and public transportation industries, it can be utilized in the private market to track live weather conditions, traffic, parking lot information, fuel consumption, and battery power.

2. Cooled seats:

While most drivers are familiar with heated seats, many vehicles now come equipped with cooled seats as well. These seats can make it more comfortable to drive on hot days and improve air flow in the car as they work in conjunction with vehicle HVAC systems. Cooled seats can be expensive and will add weight to a vehicle, so they may be best for heavy sedans, SUVs and light trucks.

3. Wireless phone charging:

Electronic devices have been going wireless for years, and the newest crop of wireless tech is wireless phone chargers. The

online tech resource CNET says wireless charging pads have become ubiquitous in offices and homes, but now they're becoming useful tools inside cars. Portable charging pads can plug into the automobile auxiliary power DC outlet. For example, the X-Doria Defense Helix wireless car charging mount with RoboGrip has powered "robotic" arms that automatically open when you place your phone near the charger and then clamp shut after you dock it. Wireless charging pads are built into vehicles manufactured by Lincoln and Mercedes-Benz, and may soon be standard technology on more cars and trucks.

4. Apple CarPlay:

Mobile phone users tend to fall into two distinct camps: those who prefer iPhones and those who rave about Android offerings. Many car manufactures have realized consumers want CarPlay (and Android Auto) built standard into their vehicles. These apps allow drivers to access their most-used apps conveniently without an extra learning curve for manufacturer-specific driver assist apps.

5. Second- and third-row USB ports:

USB ports for second- and third-row passengers is essential when moving an SUV full of kids or taking a road trip with the family.

Various vehicle tech features can improve comfort and convenience in modern cars and trucks.

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