

Get your vehicle ready for winter



Tips from the Posse

By Mark Rackay

I am not a big fan of electric vehicles (EV), especially for the outdoor person who likes to take the road less travelled. In my truck, I can always throw in a half dozen gas cans, to assure I signed up for the round-trip ride into the backcountry. With an EV, I can't afford extra batteries on a trailer to tow behind, and I don't have a long enough extension cord.

My hobbies have always included torque and raw horsepower, especially in boats, and I still get a rush from the sound of headers, muffler less exhaust, in a not naturally aspirated big block. The EV is just too quiet. Perhaps I need to wait for technology to catch up with the idea, but in the meantime, I will keep my GMC truck.

There have been scores of rumors and internet falsehoods running around about people stranded on the Interstate during a blizzard, and the EVs not performing well. Some claim the battery ran out while the people were stranded, leaving the motorist in the cold. Such was not the case.

A January storm last winter, trapped hundreds of motorists on I-95 for over 24 hours, as the crowd waited for tow trucks to clear away a series of accidents. The incident started a debate about how America is not ready for EVs, assuming their car would run out of juice long before the other cars ran out of



Even when you think you are completely prepared for winter, you can still get your vehicle stuck, leaving you stranded until help comes along. (Courtesy photo)

gas. The story went on to state the EVs would also need tows, at least to the nearest charging station.

The story prompted many of the EV drivers to state their EV intelligently directed power to the temperature regulation, while the gas cars had to run their engine to keep the heater going and stay warm. One motorist claimed he was trapped for 14 hours, with the heater going the entire time, and safely made it to the charging station with a 50-mile surplus remaining.

Anyone who has lived in Colorado long enough, knows that it has happened here, and will again. Even without a storm, you could slide into a ditch along a trail less travelled and spend many hours there before finding any help. Whether you drive an EV or a gas vehicle, you should get your rig ready, and carry some supplies, just in case.

Start with the obvious things, like your car battery. I purchase new batteries for my truck every 2 years, regardless of the length of the warranty. My truck gets used year-round, many times for rescue operations. Batteries never die in town or in your garage, rather

they fail when you park your truck up in the mountains, a 120 miles northwest of nowhere. All that warranty is good for up there is kindling for your survival fire. As to the EV, always start with a full charge, and keep your mileage in mind, allowing for surplus.

Condition, inflation and type of tires should be obvious. I remember my grandfather always having to put on his snow tires in the fall. He was usually one snowstorm late. Highway tread or standard radials are fine for around town, but not when you head into the backcountry. Start out with good snow tread tires and be sure they are properly inflated.

A good set of chains is a must, especially if you get off the beaten paths. Make sure the chains fit your tires. I carried a set around for 2 years that were too small for my tires. I got a larger set of tires and never thought to check the chains. Be sure yours are in good condition, have tighteners and spare links.

Colorado does have a traction law which states all vehicles are required to have either:

4WD or AWD vehicle and 3/16" tread depth- Tires with a mud and snow designation (M+S icon) and 3/16" tread depth Winter tires (mountain-snowflake icon) and 3/16" tread depth Tires with an all-weather rating by the manufacturer and 3/16" tread depth Chains or an approved alternative traction device. In 2019, the law was updated to add the following:

From Sept. 1 to May 31, the Traction Law is always active on I-70 from Dotsero to Morrison. The minimum tread depth for tires on all vehicles increased to 3/16".

Driving on the top half of your fuel tank is something I learned during my hurricane evacuation days. The extra fuel can keep the car warm if you find yourself stranded in a blizzard. Cars don't run out of fuel in the driveway of the gas station, they choose the end of the road, 17 miles from cell service to use the last of the fuel from the tank. A couple extra gas cans could prove lifesaving.

If you are an outdoor person, like me, you will travel the road less travelled by. If you become

stranded on that road, help may be days away. With the limited range of EVs, and no ability to carry extra power, it is probably best to avoid the backcountry.

Carry some extra heavy clothing and footwear for everyone with you. I keep a couple of those military wool blankets in the truck. A vehicle is not insulated very well, and the temperature will drop very quickly inside if you are stranded.

Do not to stray away from your car. Your chances of walking out in a blizzard and living to talk about it are very slim. It is better to bundle up and stay put until help arrives.

If you choose to run the engine for warmth, try keeping it five to 10 minutes per hour. Be certain that the exhaust area is clear, so the deadly fumes do not come into the car. This is the main reason for driving on the top half of your fuel tank. This is where the EV might excel, running only the heater.

Place a small survival kit in the vehicle; a large tote will do, loaded with some of these items:

- Small first aid kit and necessary prescription drugs.
- Flashlight with lots of extra batteries. Lithium batteries are best in cold weather.
- A couple of those 8-hour survival candles. These give off a fair amount of heat in a closed area.
- A bunch of non-perishable food and lots of drinking water. A full belly fights the cold better than an empty one, especially if you have kids who are always "starving" like mine.
- If you have pets, pack food, water, blankets, for them too.

Bring your cell phone with you anytime you head out in the winter. An extra battery pack is a good idea, so the phone has a good charge when you need it. If you find yourself stranded, and without cell service, try texting. Call when you can and text when you can't.

I am not ready for an EV yet, especially for emergency services or off-roading, but someday, the technology might get there. Now if they could duplicate the feeling and sound of a 1200 horsepower blower motor, I might get interested sooner.

Mark Rackay is a columnist for the Montrose Daily Press, Delta County Independent, and several other newspapers, as well as a feature writer for several saltwater fishing magazines. He is an avid hunter and world class saltwater angler, who travels around the world in search of adventure and serves as a Director and Public Information Officer for the Montrose County Sheriff's Posse. Personal email is elkhunter77@icloud.com. For information about the Posse call 970-765-7033 (leave a message) or email info@mcspi.org



It looks like everyone is getting excited and making preparations for Thanksgiving dinner. (Photo/ Linda Corwine McIntosh)

Are you thankful for pumpkins?



Gardening From A to Z

By Linda Corwine McIntosh

I don't know about you, but I've put my garden to bed for the winter and the snow and cold weather has turned my thoughts toward preparations for Thanks-

giving. My sister sent me an email about the biggest pumpkin grown this year and that definitely got me craving pumpkin pie and everything pumpkin.

Of course I had to check out what the heaviest pumpkin ever recorded is and I discovered the winner was actually grown in Minnesota last year, not in 2024. That big guy weighed 2,749 lbs. Wow, now that's a huge pumpkin! My first thought was that's a huge ugly pumpkin. But then I thought it would sure make a lot of pies! However, the truth is big pumpkins don't make good pies, especially when they're that big. If you


want to use pumpkin for baking or soups the smaller ones have better flavor and texture.

Just in case you're wondering, according to Guinness world records, the largest pumpkin pie weighed 3,699 lbs. This giant pie was made by New Bremen Giant Pumpkin Growers at the New Bremen Pumpkin fest in New Bremen, Ohio, September 2010. The diameter of the pie was 20 ft. The crust was made of 440 sheets of dough. I don't know where they found an oven or pie pan big enough to bake it. They cheated though. They use canned

pumpkin to make the pie. It took 1,212 lbs. of canned pumpkin. They must have gone through a lot of can openers.


Now that you have envisioned a mammoth pumpkin pie, take a second to think about that first Thanksgiving at Plymouth Rock. Are you picturing Pilgrims and pumpkin pie? I know I am although pumpkin pie wasn't really wasn't a part of that traditional feast. They say that's because they didn't have baking ovens at the Plantation. But that doesn't mean pumpkin wasn't a part of



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