

A little
Rolls-Royce
with a
big heart.
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TEST DRIVE

A Bigger Boost

2017 Ford F-150 XLT 4x4 Supercrew

DAN LYONS | text
Special to the Times Union

Redesigned in 2015, the 2017 edition of the F-150 is marked by the addition of a new, top engine option. A \$2,095 option, the second generation, 3.5L EcoBoost engine is matched exclusively with the also-new, 10-speed automatic transmission (\$500). As fitted in my XLT grade test truck, the turbo V-6 is rated at 375 horsepower and 470 lb.-ft. of torque. It's available on all trim levels, and if your budget allows for it, the EcoBoost/10-speed combo has a lot going for it. With the Max Trailer Tow Package (\$1,195), the EcoBoost powered F-150 can pull up to 12,200 lb., and has a maximum payload of 3,220 lb. Those numbers compare with 10,100 lb. and 3,270 lb., respectively on Ford's other



2017 Ford F-150 XLT 4x4 Supercrew
MSRP: \$26,540 · As Tested: \$52,775

top motor, the 5.0L V-8. The eight (\$1,795) is paired with an older design, six speed automatic transmission. The turbo six 4x4 is predicted to return 17 miles per gallon city/22 highway/19 combined. That compares with the 5.0L's expected 15/21/17 (4x4). My latest F-150 test drive returned 17 mpg's in mixed driving. That's consistent with my experience in other EcoBoost engines, in that it's below the EPA estimates. That said, the fuel economy is about the only disappointment with



PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE MANUFACTURER

F-150's are available in three cab configurations — regular, SuperCab (with smaller, rear-hinged back doors), and SuperCrew, which is fitted with four, full-size doors.



this drivetrain. The power is smooth and abundant at high or low speeds, and the 10-speed does a nice job of spreading it out. The six is agreeably quiet, with plenty in reserve for passing and towing. The 10-speed is a welcome addition; its arrival had been slowed by the substantial task of developing the F-series aluminum alloy bodies. In addition to the 3.5-liter EcoBoost V6 and the 5.0 V8, there are two other engine choices. The base motor is a 3.5L V6 (282 h.p., 253 lb.-ft. of torque). Maximum payload is 1,910 lb. and it's rated to tow up to 7,600 lb. Also available is a 2.7L EcoBoost V6 (325 h.p., 375 lb.-ft. of torque). Maximum payload is 2,210 lb. and towing tops out at 8,500 lb.

The power is smooth and abundant at high or low speeds, and the 10-speed does a nice job of spreading it out.

Both the 6-speed and 10-speed automatic transmissions have Select Shift and a tow/haul mode. The latter helps the driver keep things in line, when towing or hauling heavy loads, especially when descending grades. The system uses electronic sensors to identify the optimum time for downshifting, improving driver control through engine braking. All 4x4 models can be equipped with the FX4 Off-Road Package (\$770) that include powertrain skid plates, specially tuned shocks absorb-ers and an electronic locking rear axle. The improved, off-road capability comes at the expense of a stiffer ride.

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