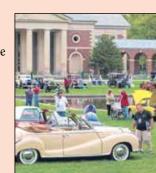
Ford, Chevy think small
Subcompact SUVs
in the pipeline
PAGE 2

Spi
Loca
ever
that
PAGE

Spring has sprung
Local automotive events start thawing out.
PAGE 3



Will Bronco blow its top?



The area's most complete automotive resource and listings.

1,497 vehicles for sale inside — plus more than 7,000 online at timesunion.com/cars

Automotive

timesunion.com/cars

Community comes together for injured mechanic

TEST DRIVE

Ridgeline, Revisited

2019 Honda Ridgeline

DAN LYONS | text Special to the Times Union

he mid-size pickup market is due for a shakeup. The players have remained the same for some time now, but that's about to change. This year will see the introduction of two new models, with two old names — Ford Ranger and Jeep Gladiator.

Those brands already in the segment can view the expansion in one of two ways. Either it's more competi-

tion, or it signals a rising tide that will lift all boats (or, you know, pickups).

Honda's Ridgeline entered the market in 2006. Production of the first generation ran relatively unchanged until 2014, when the model was withdrawn from the lineup. It returned — fully redesigned — in 2017, and year

two of Gen 2 for the Honda pickup brings few changes. Ridgeline's MSRP range is \$29,990-\$44,395. The base, RT is front-wheel-drive only, while the top two trims (RTL-E and Black Edition) are equipped with standard all-wheel-drive. All models in between (Sport,

2019 Honda Ridgeline

MSRP: \$29,990 (RT/FWD); \$44,870 (Black Edition/AWD); As Tested: \$42,915 (RTL-E/AWD)

RTL, RTL-T), can swap their FWD for AWD for an additional \$1,900. My test drive truck was an RTL-E, with an as-delivered price tag of \$42,915.

Though there's just one engine/transmission offered, it's hard to argue with. Honda's 3.5L V-6 engine is rated at 280 horsepower (@ 6,000 rpm) and 262 lb.-ft. of torque (@ 4,700 rpm). That's quite a power boost over





THE HONDA RIDGELINE returned to the mid-size pickup market fully redesigned in 2017. The sole engine is a 3.5L V-6 rated at 280 h.p. and 262 lb.-ft. of torque. A lockable hatch beneath the bed (left) also holds the spare tire.

Sure-footed in wintry

conditions, Ridgeline

is guite capable of

light off-roading.

the previous generation Ridgeline (+30 and +15, respectively) and it feels right-sized in this truck. Lively off the line, it has power to pass, and it's unstressed at highway speeds. At 65 mph, the engine is turning just 1,800 rpm. That's with a six-speed automatic transmission, when eight and 10 speeds are becoming more common, proof that the number of gears is less im-

portant than how they're spaced.

If you plan on towing the occasional trailer, the ratings for FWD and AWD Ridgelines are markedly different — 3,500 lb. with the former, 5,000 lb. with the latter.

Fuel economy is in the same (middling) ballpark as the rest of this class. EPA says you can expect 19/26/22 with FWD and 18/25 /21 w

19/26/22 with FWD, and 18/25 /21 with AWD. I logged 17 in my week behind the wheel.

While not as suited to trail traversing as the Toyota

Tacoma (or soon, Jeep's Gladiator), Ridgeline is nonetheless quite capable of light off-roading. And, Honda's torque vectoring AWD system proved sure-footed in wintry conditions. A traction management system on AWD-equipped models allows the driver to fine tune their grip by choosing from Normal, Snow, Mud or Sand modes. Ride quality is good for the breed. There's a little impact harshness with an unloaded box, but it's overall smooth sailing.

Speaking of boxes, you access the Ridgeline's by

means of a two-way tailgate which can either drop flat, or swing wide, like a door. Bed length is 64-83 inches (tailgate raised/ lowered) and there's 50 inches of width between the wheel wells.

Eight tie-downs allow you to secure your load. Below deck, there's a lockable trunk, big enough to fit a golf bag, a guitar, or a 20-gallon

cooler — or some combination. Or, you can just turn the whole trunk into a cooler (it's got a drain plug). The only downside I see in back is the location of the spare tire, which will require that you unload the back portion of the box (and maybe some of the trunk contents) to access it, if needed.

Continued on page 2

