

AUTOMOBILE STUDY

California cars most fuel-efficient in U.S.

Californians own the most fuel-efficient vehicles in the nation. My trusty spreadsheet analyzed estimates of average miles-per-gallon by state compiled by Iseecars. The study looked at vehicles in the used market and the manufacturer's listed mpg for various models.

California cars are getting an average 31 miles per gallon, easily the best in the nation. The rest of the top 10 for fuel use are No. 2 Hawaii at 28.4 mpg, then Washington state at 28.2, Oregon at 27.9, Nevada at 27.5, Arizona and Colorado at 27.2, Virginia and Maryland at 27.1, and Utah at 26.8. And the least efficient? North Dakota and Wyoming at 22.5 mpg, then Montana at 22.8, South Dakota at 23, Iowa at 23.7, West Virginia at 23.9, Nebraska at 24.1, and Michigan, Alaska, and Arkansas at 24.2.



Jonathan Lansner
Columnist

What's driving this?

I'll use the extremes of these top and bottom states to suggest the forces behind these mpg gaps. Note that the high mpg states average 27.9 miles per gallon vs. 23.5 in low-efficiency states. That's a noteworthy 18% difference.

GAS PRICE » You can link fuel efficiency to states with more pain at the pump. Gas averaged \$4.16 per gallon in high mpg states in mid-July, using AAA fuel data. California ranked No. 2 at \$4.88. Compare those expenses to an average of \$3.53 in low-efficiency states. That's an 18% gap in gas prices.

DRIVING RANGE » It's curious to see how fuel efficiency smooths out the hit to the wallet from high gas prices. So let's imagine the fuel cost

of a 250-mile drive, assuming a state's miles-per-gallon efficiency and its gas costs. In the 10 high mpg states, this hypothetical driver spends an average \$37.28 on gas. In the low mpg states it's \$37.57. Barely any difference. Oh, and in California, that drive costs \$39.32, the eighth-highest.

ALTERNATIVE FUELS » Look at ownership of vehicles powered by electricity, hybrids or hydrogen/natural gas. The 10 high-efficiency states have 6.3% of all vehicles using alternative fuels, according to Iseecars stats. It's only 2.4% in low-efficiency states. By the way, California ranked No. 1 at 10%.

PICKUPS » Consider how many of these relative gas-guzzlers are driven in a state, using Iseecars data. Pickup trucks are 16% of all vehicles in the high mpg states vs. 28% in low-efficiency states.

And California ranked No. 47 at 11.7%.

SAFETY » Some drivers shy from smaller cars — often more fuel efficient — due to the perceived dangers of being encased in less metal. A federal driving risk measurement suggests it's not an unfounded fear. There are 1.26 deaths per million miles driven in high mpg states vs. 1.33 in low-efficiency states. By the way, California ranked No. 20 at 1.38 deaths per million miles driven.

Bottom line

The mpg gap can be tied to several car-buying preferences. But a peek at paychecks suggests fuel "economy" isn't a greater motivator. In the 10 high mpg states, the average household median income was \$79,377 a year. California ranked No. 5 at \$84,907. In low-efficiency states, however, the incomes averaged

\$63,865. One might think that places with smaller salaries might be eyeing the miles-per-gallon more carefully.

Politically speaking

Fans of fuel efficiency are often painted with "progressive" political stripes. Putting a state's political leanings into numbers, thanks to the Cook Partisan Voter Index, that theory has some truth to it. The 10 high mpg states had an average ranking equal to being the 15th most Democratic state. California was graded as the fifth-most Democratic. Conversely, the 10 low-efficiency states ranked as the 11th-most Republican on average.

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STATUS UPDATE



Samantha Gowen has the latest on movers and shakers in Orange County
Send items about business expansion, milestones and promotions to sgowen@scng.com

Barbie's Dreamhouse Truck to visit OC sites over the weekend

Barbie's pink Mercedes panel van is coming to town this weekend. On the heels of the movie debut of "Barbie," the eponymous glamour girl's 2023 Truck Dreamhouse Living Tour is making two stops in Orange County on Saturday and Sunday. The first stop for the Barbie regalia will be at Irvine Spectrum from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Saturday at Giant Wheel Court, 670 Spectrum Drive. Next up is Fashion Island on Sunday from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. at the Neiman Marcus store courtyard, 401 Newport Center Drive. The Dreamhouse truck is loaded with apparel, home goods and accessories "inspired by a day in the life of Barbie in her Dreamhouse." Customers and fans can peruse T-shirts and hoodies (it's California, after all), denim, baseball caps, throw blankets, mugs and cups. Shoppers must have a debit/credit card to make a purchase in Barbie's truck. Prices range from \$12 to \$75. For more information, go to barbie.com/BarbieTruck.

Regal in Foothill Ranch closing on Wednesday

Moviegoers in the mood to spend a few hours with Barbie or J. Robert Oppenheimer will have to hurry — or wait — to catch the films at the Regal theater in Foothill Ranch. Regal, which is shedding theater locations in bankruptcy, has sold the facility to Cinemark, according to an employee who answered the phone there Friday. The movie theater at 26602 Town Center Drive in Lake Forest will have its last day as a Regal brand on Wednesday. It will close for a short time, said the employee, who didn't offer more details. Fortunately for the Regal staff, they've all been retained on Cinemark's payroll, she said. A timeline for the reopening was not immediately known, but "hopefully soon." The local Regal closure is the latest in a series for Cineworld, the parent company now operating as NewCo. The company filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy in September. Since January, at least seven theaters in Southern California have been earmarked for closure, including Anaheim Hills 14, Calabasas Stadium 6, the Westpark 8 theater in Irvine, Metro Point Costa Mesa, Hemet Cinema 12, Sherman Oaks Galleria 16, and Yorda Linda and Imax theater, according to records.



COURTESY OF BARBIE TRUCK DREAMHOUSE LIVING TOUR

The Barbie Truck Dreamhouse Living Tour comes to Irvine Spectrum and Fashion Island on Saturday and Sunday, respectively. Barbie fans can buy an assortment of pink merchandise and apparel at the truck.



COURTESY OF LSSSC

LaSharnda Beckwith, center, president and CEO of Lutheran Social Services of Southern California, accepts a recent financial award.



COURTESY OF GOOGLE STREET VIEW

Regal's movie theater in Foothill Ranch has been sold and is closing Wednesday. It reportedly will reopen under the Cinemark brand.



COURTESY OF LAMBORGHINI NEWPORT BEACH

Automobili Lamborghini has a new showroom at the Irvine Auto Center. The luxury Italian automaker is celebrating its 60th year.

Lamborghini welcomes new Irvine showroom

Automobili Lamborghini has officially celebrated the debut of its showroom at the Irvine Auto Center. The Italian automaker, which is celebrating its 60th anniversary this year, sent executives including Automobili Lamborghini Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Stephan Winkelmann, Federico Foschini, chief marketing and sales officer, and Andrea Baldi, CEO of the Americas division, to the ribbon-cutting ceremony at 44 Auto Center Drive. "California continues to

be the top performing market in the U.S., commanding 25% of total sales for the country, and Orange County has long been one of the strongest markets globally for Lamborghini," said Winkelmann. "This new showroom will provide a further elevated experience for our clientele as we transition into a new era of electrified vehicles, beginning with the Revuelto plug-in hybrid super sports car." Lamborghini Newport Beach is just steps from McLaren Newport Beach, which debuted late last year and celebrated its grand opening in late June.

Alzheimer's conference Aug. 3 in Garden Grove

Family caregivers of dementia patients are invited to a conference Aug. 3 hosted by Alzheimer's Orange County at Christ Cathedral in Garden Grove. Lori La Bey, founder of Alzheimer's Speaks, is the keynote speaker. Local physicians and other dementia experts are among the featured panelists. Tickets for the event are \$25 and include the full program and lunch. To register and read more details, go to alzoc.org/care-con.

New CEO appointed for MemorialCare groups

David Kim is returning to MemorialCare after eight years with Providence, appointed chief executive of MemorialCare Medical Foundation, MemorialCare Medical Group and Greater Newport Physicians. He also carries the title of executive vice president of MemorialCare Health System's parent entity. His positions are effective Aug. 21. Kim previously worked for the hospital group from 2009-2015. He will lead MemorialCare's physician and ambulatory care division, which includes more than 2,000 affiliated medical groups and independent physicians. He also will oversee MemorialCare's joint ventures for services such as imaging, dialysis, surgery centers, physical therapy and dental services. He's also been named CEO of the MemorialCare Heart & Vascular Institute and the MemorialCare Cancer Institute and as the lead physician executive of the MemorialCare Clinically Integrated Network.

On the move

Orange County Power



Kim

Authority in Irvine has hired Patty Cruz as its new energy programs analyst. Owen Lee, the organization's accountant, has been promoted from controller to director of finance and data analytics. Steven Halligan also was promoted to regulatory and legislative manager from management analyst. Scott Corngold has joined the law firm Gilson Daub's team in San Clemente as a trial attorney. He was part of a three-person hire from the law firm Kegel, Tobin, and Truce. Corngold is an expert in worker's compensation litigation, misconduct cases, and Labor Code Section 132a claims.

On board

First Five Orange County has appointed Angie Rowe to its board of commissioners. Rowe, president and CEO of Beyond Blindness, will serve a 2-year term as education commissioner.

Milestones

- Percy Lee, medical director of Orange County & Coastal Regional Oncology at City of Hope and an expert in radiation oncology, has been named a Fellow of the American Society for Radiation Oncology. Lee practices at City of Hope Orange County Lennar Foundation Cancer Center. He also serves as vice chair for clinical research in the Department of Radiation Oncology at City of Hope.
- LaSharnda Beckwith, president and CEO of Orange-based Lutheran Social Services of Southern California, received Wipfli's 2023 Innovation Excellence Award, recognizing the organization's vision to create a long-term housing solution for homeless men in San Bernardino. The organization's planned \$38 million project will double its capacity to provide services supporting living skills, workforce training, behavioral health and social services. The award came with a \$20,000 donation to Lutheran Social Services. The Wipfli award honors the late Evelyn Wright Moore, a Head Start leader from Texas who attended 16 Wipfli national training conferences. She died in 2017.



Lee

Status Update is compiled from press releases by contributing writer Karen Levin and edited by Business Editor Samantha Gowen. Submit items and high-resolution photos to sgowen@scng.com. Allow at least one week for publication. Items are edited for length and clarity.