

Practical and capable

The 2017 GMC Acadia is the Epitome of Versatility



Heading off road is no trouble for GMC Acadia All Terrain, shown here along the Susquehanna River near Sunbury.

Duct tape, a Swiss Army knife and the GMC Acadia.

When it comes to practical versatility, it is hard to find a more fitting hat trick.

While you may not be able to fix a leaky faucet with the mid-sized SUV, it can handle a variety of situations with class and confidence — very few vehicles offer off-road maneuverability, a respectable towing package and seven-passenger seating packaged with a sophisticated design that rivals any of the Acadia's more luxury-focused competitors.

I recently had the privilege of driving the GMC Acadia All-Terrain — one of three models the mid-sized SUV offers — and it quickly became a vehicle the whole family enjoyed.

My mother, who had ankle surgery two months ago, decided to tag along on a trip to the farm show in Harrisburg in early January and the Acadia was able to comfortably accommodate my two daughters and her along with a wheelchair, crutches, a stash of snacks and drinks and a variety of other items for the trip.

The Acadia handled curvy mountain roads with plenty of power while the all-

wheel drive capabilities helped navigate snowy stretches without a slip.

The interior is well-designed, giving the driver easy access to all the extra bells and whistles that make driving the Acadia so fun. My backseat passengers jammed out to the XM satellite radio's Kid's Place Live channel while enjoying the dual sunroofs, ample leg space and a variety of media plug-in options including USB ports and an AC plug. At one point, my 10-year-old declared that the Acadia "is a real dream."

Meanwhile, up front, a touchscreen infotainment console with Apple CarPlay, Android Auto, 4G LTE connectivity and mobile Wi-Fi was an instant hit — although my two favorite features included heated seats and a unique dashboard display that simultaneously shows you both your current speed and the speed limit on the road you are driving at the time.

The 2017 line of Acadias are newly redesigned — and manufacturers made it a priority to make the vehicles lighter — by nearly 700 pounds. This gives the new models an improved overall feel and better gas efficiency than previous installments.

Pricing for the Acadia starts at \$29,995 for the front-wheel-drive SL model and

goes up to at least \$35,375 for the SLE to get the optional all-wheel drive. All versions come well equipped and get progressively more luxurious up to the \$46,240 Denali, which includes the V-6, additional chrome pieces, specific six-spoke wheels, wood trim — and the potential to push the sticker beyond \$50K with options.

The All Terrain starts at \$41,925 with standard all-wheel drive and V-6 power. Along with the upgraded drivetrain and darker trim, it also features its own wheel design and seat detailing. Importantly, the All Terrain is the only five-seat Acadia — its third row is replaced by a flat load surface with two additional underfloor storage bins.

That flat-load surface can hold quite a lot — especially when the rear seat is folded flat — offering 79 cubic feet of cargo space — enough for an eight-foot kayak with paddles or other outdoorsy load befitting of an all-terrain SUV.

The new 3.6-liter V6 produces around 310 horsepower with a towing capacity of 4,000 pounds. The optional Tow Vision Training system makes that pulling easier. Gas mileage varies based on model, with the All Terrain averaging about 20 miles per gallon between city and highway driving.

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