

➔ TODAY'S VERSE
John 8:32 *And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*

➔ FACES OF MONTGOMERY
People who call our community their own.



Kaley Remley offers a fabulous smile while doing a little local shopping. Thank you for your smile, Kaley!

➔ THREE THINGS You Should Know:

1 It may be a new year, but you still have time to give a gift – the gift of life. Over in Waveland on Friday is a blood drive at the Waveland Library, located at 115 E. Green St. It's scheduled from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. in conjunction with the American Red Cross. Contact the library for more details at (765) 435-2700 or e-mail them at director@waveland.lin.in.us

2 Ever since the inception of our Sunday edition, The Paper has gone with a 365-day publishing cycle. Beginning in 2022, The Paper will not publish on holidays. We are doing this for three reasons – our advertisers say the days leading up to the holiday are more important than the holiday itself; readers have busy schedules on holidays and those editions are the least clicked of any we do; and to give our hard-working staff a break. Thank you for your understanding!

3 As of last week, Clinton County is an official Broadband Ready Community. The Broadband Ready Communities Program was created as a tool to encourage broadband development throughout Indiana. The Broadband Ready Community certification sends a signal to the telecommunication industry that a community has taken steps to reduce barriers to broadband infrastructure investment. The certification was approved by the Indiana Broadband Office following the Clinton County Commissioners adoption of a Broadband Ready Community ordinance.

The Paper

OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY

Montgomery County's oldest locally owned independent newspaper 50¢

CRAWFORDSVILLE, INDIANA

WWW.THEPAPER24-7.COM

BTN By The Numbers, a look at what's in the news . . . by the numbers. These are just numbers, not suggestions that they mean more or less than what they are. We do not suggest that one number is connected to another. These are simply facts with no extraneous details, bias or slanted reporting. To borrow (and perhaps mangle a bit) a quote from legendary fictional detective Joe Friday, it's just the numbers, ma'am!



The Crawfordsville Fire Department recently put the department's new 2,000 gallons per minute 100' aerial tower into service. All three shifts have been trained on aerial operations from the tower's manufacturer, Pierce Manufacturing.

\$10,000 Crawfordsville High School and Tri Kappa Sorority Sunshine Society Cheer Campaign is inching closer to its goal. After the third week, the annual community outreach program has topped \$10,000. The goal of \$15,000 is within reach, and perhaps topping last year's mark of \$20,000 is now possible. Anyone may donate. Some donations are anonymous, some are in memory of family or friends.

The Indiana Arts Commission (IAC) announced it has awarded \$204,000 to 102 creative entrepreneurs to fund arts projects around the state through the agency's On-Ramp Creative Entrepreneur Accelerator program. These graduation rates correspond with research that shows that the academic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic are substantial.

1,246,854 According to the Indiana State Department of Health on Friday, that's how many Hoosiers have been diagnosed with the virus.

18,386 How many Hosiers have died because of this pandemic.

7,936 Number of COVID-19 cases found so far in Montgomery County, according to the State Health Department.

132 How many people in Montgomery County who have lost their lives to the pandemic.



1/7 Just because Christmas is over, don't get out of the spirit of giving yet! You have a wonderful opportunity to give the gift of life by going to Waveland on Jan. 7 so that you can donate blood. This life-saving event takes place at the Waveland Library, located at 115 E. Green St. from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. in conjunction with the American Red Cross. Contact the library for more details at (765) 435-2700 or e-mail them at director@waveland.lin.in.us

\$35.2 million Governor Eric J. Holcomb and the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) announced that \$35.2 million in state and federal grant funds are being awarded to 123 community partners and schools across the state.

102 The number of creative entrepreneurs awarded funding.

53,795,407 According to the CDC, that's how many Americans have been diagnosed with the virus.

820,355 How many Americans have lost their lives to the pandemic

The Daily Almanac

Sunrise/Sunset
RISE: 8:10 a.m.
SET: 5:36 p.m.



High/Low Temperatures
High: 32 °F
Low: 19 °F



Wacky Holiday Today
• Memento Mori
• Women Rock! Day



What Happened On This Day
• 1959 Alaska becomes the 49th U.S. state
• 1957 The first electric watch is available



Births On This Day
• 1956 Mel Gibson American/Australian actor
• 1892 J. R. R. Tolkien English philologist, author

Deaths On This Day
• 2010 Mary Daly American philosopher
• 1967 Jack Ruby American murderer

➔ HONEST HOOSIER

So this is what 2022 looks like? I'm hoping it's a stark improvement from the first two years of the pandemic.



➔ TODAY'S HEALTH TIP

If you feel overwhelmed, write down your to-do list and prioritize it. Simplify large tasks into smaller ones. Today's health tip was brought to you by Dr. John Roberts. Be sure to catch his column each week in The Paper and online at www.thepaper24-7.com.



➔ OBITUARIES

James "Jim" Allen Smith
Kim Starnes

The Paper appreciates all our customers. Today, we'd like to personally thank John Edie of Crawfordsville for subscribing!



The Paper
OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY

➔ INSIDE TODAY'S EDITION

CEL&PA1
Public Notices.....A4
Classifieds.....A3
Belton.....A2

➔ THE MONTGOMERY MINUTE

Churches still get free ads

We want to start 2022 on the good foot, so please remember that any church in the county is eligible for a free ad from the friendliest newspaper in Montgomery County? Why? Well, we've been doing this a while because we think it's the right thing to do. The way the program works is fairly simple. The Paper will give small ads at no cost to any church inside Montgomery County. The church provides basics like service times and contact info, and can include a message of faith and inspiration. With the pandemic, virtual services are expanding and info on that might be included. The normal cost of the ad is \$50 to \$65 and The Paper is absorbing 100 percent of the cost. To take advantage, just contact Paper Publisher Tim Timmons at ttimmons@thepaper24-7.com.

➔ TODAY'S QUOTE

"The first step toward getting somewhere is to decide you're not going to stay where you are."
J.P. Morgan

➔ TODAY'S JOKE

What does the cat say on New Year's?
Happy Mew Year!

WTHR 13 7 DAY FORECAST

19/32 SUNNY AND COLD	24/42 WARMER	37/39 BREEZY, FALLING TEMPS	15/23 SNOW POSSIBLE, BREEZY	6/20 CLOUDS OVER, THE DEER LOG	13/40 WINDY	34/36 WINDY, FALLING TEMPS
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN

Births

A daughter, Brooklynn Nicolette Thompson, was born at Witham Hospital in Lebanon to Brianna Beavers and Adam Thompson, both of Crawfordville on Dec. 28, 2021.

Brooklynn will be welcomed home by sister, Raelyn Millburg.

Maternal grandparents are Edward Beavers

and Brandilyn Beavers of Crawfordville; and paternal grandparents are Donna Thompson of Crawfordville and Michelle Stewart of Lincoln Ill.

Maternal great-grandparents are Beverly Dorene Barnhart of Crawfordville, Ind.; and paternal great-grandparents are Tony and Jeanne Jones of Lafayette, Ind.

Finding my uncle a funny present for his 90th birthday



Carrie Classon
Columnist

Want MORE?

Carrie Classon's memoir, "Blue Yarn: A Memoir About Loss, Letting Go, & What Happens Next" is available at Amazon, Barnes and Noble, and other fine stores. Learn more at CarrieClasson.com.

My Uncle Andy recently turned 90, and it was hard to imagine what a guy would like for his 90th birthday.

At 90, getting a lot of new stuff doesn't sound very appealing. Andy is in the process of getting rid of stuff, a job made more challenging by the fact that neither he nor his wife, Bea, have any children to fob the stuff off on. Andy and Bea live in the farmhouse where my mom was raised, and we were stumped when the subject of a 90th birthday present came up.

"What does Andy like?" I asked my mom.

"Bad jokes," my mom answered.

"How about a book of bad jokes? We could make one as a family."

So I put out the call for bad jokes on the family Facebook page. At first, I heard nothing. I don't know many jokes, and I was worried I'd have to make a joke book by myself in time for the party in the small country church near the old farmhouse.

Then I got an email from my cousin Sarah.

What do you call a deer with one eye?

A one-eyed deer.

What do you call a deer with no eyes?

No eye deer!

And the floodgates were opened.

Q: What's brown and sticky?

A: A stick."

Who's bigger? Mr. Bigger or Mr. Bigger's Baby?

Mr. Bigger's Baby! He's just a little bigger.

I was flooded with jokes. I got shaggy dog jokes, knock-knock jokes, and Lena jokes. I got lots of jokes about farms since Andy is a retired farmer.

What did the cow say to the calf? "It's pasture bedtime."

Before it was over, I had a book filled with terrible jokes sent in by Andy's

family. I was glad we had done it, glad my family had come through, glad they'd all chipped in to give Andy something to laugh about on the occasion of his 90th.

The New Year is upon us, and I don't think I'm the only one who needs a little more to laugh about. I usually have no trouble finding the upside, but lately there seems to be more bad news than I can process in any given day. It's easy to believe, looking out on the gray weather and reading the dire news, that this year might not bring all the good things I hope for, that this year might let me down, that there might not be as much to look forward to as there has been in past years.

And I guess that's where bad jokes come in.

Andy broke his leg not too long ago and is still using a walker to get around. We wonder how long he and Bea will be able to stay at the old farmhouse, outside of town on a lonely country road. But as I sat there watching Bea and Andy laughing at terrible jokes and eating birthday cake, I realized they understood all of this.

Because most of what makes a good year good, and a bad year bad, has nothing to do with the big picture. Most of it has to do with how I feel and behave in any given day, at any given moment. And sometimes, all that is needed to change that moment is a reason to laugh. Sometimes all that is needed is to laugh for no reason at all.

People say they pick their nose, but I feel I was born with mine.

For no reason at all, that made my day.

Till next time,
Carrie

Carrie Classon is a freelance writer and author and lives in New Mexico. Her columns appear each Wednesday.

OBITUARIES

Kim Starnes

July 9, 1965 - Dec. 28, 2021

Kimberly "Kim" Starnes, 56, Waynetown, passed away on Tuesday, Dec. 28, 2021 in the morning in her home.

Born July 9, 1965, in Crawfordville, she was the daughter of Gene Mikels and Carolyn Runion Mikels Cronk.

Ms. Starnes worked at County Market for several years and more recently worked at Acuity/Hi-Tek. She attended school at Crawfordville and graduated from North Montgomery.

Survivors include her son, Gary Starnes, Jr.; mother, Carolyn Cronk; brother, Dennis Mikels; step-brother, Mark Cronk; step-sister, Melissa VanCleave; aunt, Linda Dale; and uncle, David Runion.

She was preceded in death by her dad, Gene Mikels; step-father, Theron Cronk; and step-brother, Shawn Cronk.

Services will be held Monday, Jan. 3, 2022 at Burkhardt Funeral Home, 201 W. Wabash Avenue, Crawfordville, with visitation from 2:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. She will be laid to rest at the Waynetown Masonic Cemetery at a later date.

Online condolences may be made at www.Burkhardt-FH.com.

James "Jim" Allen Smith

Nov. 28, 1946 - Dec. 31, 2021

James "Jim" Allen Smith, 75, Crawfordville, passed away on Dec. 31, 2021 at The Lane House.

He was born in Crawfordville on Nov. 28, 1946 to the late Arthur and Edna (Andrews) Smith.

In 1965, Mr. Smith graduated from Linden High School. He then graduated from Indiana University with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business. He was a member of the Sigma Phi Epsilon Fraternity at Indiana University as well as the New Richmond Masonic Lodge. Mr. Smith enjoyed gardening, canning, IU basketball and annoying the heck out of his children. He was an avid reader.

Survivors include his two sons, Justin (Donna) Smith and Travis (Beth) Smith of Crawfordville; a daughter, Monica (Dan) Smith of Terre Haute; seven grandchildren; a great-granddaughter; a brother, Mac (Connie) Smith of Midway, Ky.; a sister, Jan (Steve) Moss of Twelve Mile, Ind.; and several nieces, nephews, and cousins.

He was preceded in death by his parents.

Visitation will be at Sanders Priebe Funeral Care, 315 S. Washington Street in Crawfordville on Wednesday, Jan. 5, 2022 from 4 p.m. until the time of funeral service at 6 p.m. Sanders Priebe Funeral Care is entrusted with care.

Condolences online at www.sandersfuneralcare.com.



Are complementary and alternative medicine good methods

I'm frequently asked by patients to comment on the use of "non-traditional" treatments or remedies they have heard or read about. I usually have to respond that I have limited knowledge about the product, but I will sometimes try to help patients research the product or its ingredients.

The business of complementary and alternative medicine or "CAM" is booming. This is largely an outgrowth of patient frustration with traditional medicine, as well as the ease with which CAM is promoted and sold via social media and the Internet. People are fed up with the high cost of medications and other treatments as well as the perceived loss of empathy in our health care systems.

Many are looking for less expensive "natural" ways to deal with illness and health promotion. The most recent accounting of CAM expenditures I could find was reported in the New York Times in 2016 based on a 2012 NIH study (bit.ly/3EPF1HA). The study revealed that Americans spent \$30.2 billion on CAM treatments. This accounted for 1.1 percent of total health care spending and was equivalent to 24 percent of the amount spent on prescription medications.

Traditionally, physicians trained in the U.S. receive little or no education in CAM treatments in medical school or afterward. This is beginning to change

as more medical centers are starting to bow to public demand by integrating CAM into their treatment programs.

Physicians are trained in the scientific method from an early age and rely on carefully designed medical studies to provide convincing evidence that the likelihood of a specific treatment working is not simply due to chance. In fact, medical treatments are frequently modified or abandoned when evidence indicates they are not as effective as initially thought, or that they are doing more harm than good. Most of us are therefore very hesitant to recommend or comment on treatments that we do not feel have been shown to offer a significant benefit based on current scientific knowledge.

Many physicians, including me, are concerned that CAM treatments are being promoted as legitimate by an increasing number of academic medical centers and hospitals. This is often done with weak or no scientific evidence to support their use. The buzz word for this phenomenon is "integrative medicine." Some have called it "quackademic medicine," the marketing of dubious treatments that have not been shown to provide significant benefit and that may, in fact, be harmful in some cases. You can read an interesting blog post addressing this issue, with many excellent supporting hyperlinks, at bit.ly/2EghPlz.

When researching a



JOHN R. ROBERTS, M.D.
Montgomery Medicine

product, I usually do an Internet search to find information about the product or its ingredients. The difficulty with Internet search engines like Google is that the majority of the web sites appearing at the top of a search are posted by manufacturers or sellers of the product. These sites frequently look very professional.

The sites often have testimonials by patients, physicians and/or other scientists who are being paid to endorse the product. There are frequently anecdotal stories of people who have received benefit from the product, often without any mention of side effects. I must stress to the readers that these sites are NOT the place to go for unbiased information. You should try to look for sites from academic or clinical institutions if possible. The domain names for reputable sites usually end in .edu or .org rather than .com. You should be EXTREMELY skeptical of any site that is selling a product alongside the

claims made to support its use.

Another red flag is a web site or advertisement that states physicians, scientists, the government or others are conspiring to suppress evidence that the product works. If a product were indeed shown to be such an incredible scientific breakthrough with no downside, think to yourself, "wouldn't that be the lead story for every news outlet on the planet?"

Conspiracy theories aside, people should be concerned about products marketed without firm scientific evidence that they produce the desired effect and that they are any safer than other treatments that have been shown to be effective. It's also important to remember that most CAM treatments are not regulated by any agency that looks out for the public interest. This is particularly the case with unregulated nutritional supplements that are not required to be monitored by the FDA.

Always remember to do your research and ask lots of questions. Check things out using objective resources like Consumer Reports, The Center for Science in the Public Interest, sciencebasedmedicine.com or Quackwatch.com.

Dr. John Roberts is a member of the Franciscan Physician Network specializing in Family Medicine as well as the Deputy County Health Officer in Montgomery County.

Tips to lower your home's heating bills this winter

(StatePoint) A frosty winter wonderland is fun to experience -- outside. Inside is another story. By keeping your home heating system running at peak performance, you'll lower your

winter utility bills and experience increased comfort.

According to North American Technician Excellence (NATE), here's how to stay toasty this winter without breaking the bank.

Get the Right Equipment
It all starts with the right heating equipment. Choosing a furnace with an ENERGY STAR logo is important, however, it's also a good idea to understand standard efficiency ratings so you can easily compare the performance of different systems.

When you need to measure the thermal efficiency of your furnace or water heater, Annual Fuel Utilization Efficiency (AFUE) helps determine the actual, annual, average efficiency of that piece of equipment. It measures the amount of heat delivered to your house compared to the amount of fuel that you must supply to the furnace. The U.S. Department of Energy determined that all furnaces sold in the U.S. must have a minimum AFUE of 78%.

The Heating Seasonal Performance Factor (HSPF) is the most commonly used measure of the heating

efficiency of heat pumps. Typically, a high-efficiency heat pump pays for itself in savings in a few years.

Take These Steps

A little DIY can work wonders. Follow this checklist for improved efficiency of heating equipment:

- Check heating filters every couple weeks and change them at least twice in the season, or as directed by the manufacturer.
- Check and maintain insulation. Improperly insulated walls, floors, attics, basements and crawlspaces drain away heat and can also lead to moisture imbalance.
- Check ductwork for insulation and leaks. No matter how "state of the art" your heating system is, if your ductwork is bad, it will diminish efficiency.
- Turn down the thermostat by a few degrees and dress more warmly.
- Clean the furnace area. Don't keep chemicals or cleaning products near your heater, and don't store anything next to it that could impede ventilation.
- Keep vents and returns free of obstructions.
- Install a humidifier to make indoor air feel

warmer.

Work With Experts

Be sure all work performed on your heating equipment is carried out by a trustworthy, NATE-certified technician. Even the most efficient system can suffer if it's not properly maintained. NATE-certified technicians have demonstrated knowledge of today's heating and cooling systems. Better installation and service means your equipment will run at peak efficiency. Visit nate.org for additional winter tips and resources, and to find a NATE-certified technician in your area.

If you do call in a technician, prep for their arrival. You can help your technician diagnose a potential problem with your heating equipment by being prepared to share important information, such as the age, brand and model of your furnace and whether it's been leaking, making unusual noises or emitting odors.

With a combination high-efficiency equipment, a little DIY and the help of professional expertise, you can stay warm and cozy on-budget, all season long.



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6 Service members who went above and beyond the call of duty

(StatePoint) Each year, the United Service Organizations (USO) honors the heroism of junior enlisted service members with the Service Member of the Year Awards. Service members from each branch of the military are nominated by their command leadership for performing acts of valor that go above and beyond the call of duty.

“These men and women have brought honor to their branch of service and to the country. They exemplified bravery in the face of danger and placed service above self,” says USO president and CEO, J.D. Crouch II.

Here are the stories behind 2021’s honorees:

1. Soldier of the Year: Sergeant Breanna Jessop of Myton, Utah serves with the U.S. Army’s 82nd Airborne Division. While in charge of the Karzai Airport Chapel, she ensured 4,000 military personnel and coalition forces had access to basic hygiene items. Her efforts safeguarded over 400 displaced children throughout non-combatant evacuation operations and enemy attacks, and left an indelible mark on the evacuation mission

of American citizens and designated Afghans.

2. Marine of the Year: As squad leader in support of Operation Inherent Resolve in Iraq, Sergeant Seth A. Dewey of Hesperia, Mich. led a team responsible for securing the U.S. Embassy compound perimeter in Baghdad. While subject to multiple attacks, his calm leadership and superior communication enabled vulnerable aircraft to depart the embassy helicopter pad unharmed. His actions helped shape the rules of engagement, benefiting future units and security personnel.

3. Sailor of the Year: Hospital Corpsman Second Class Petty Officer (FMF/SW) Johnharley S. Delacruz of Fountain Valley, Calif. serves with the U.S. Navy’s Combat Logistics Battalion 15, 1st Marine Logistics Group, MEF Camp Pendleton. M2 Delacruz delivered immediate lifesaving intervention after an Amphibious Assault Vehicle sank to the bottom of the ocean during training operations.

M2 Delacruz also executed an in-flight casualty evacuation independently, protecting the patient’s airway, monitoring vital

signs, obtaining intravenous access and using his own body heat to impede hypothermia while in-flight. His actions enabled his patient to survive and recover.

4. Airman of the Year: Staff Sergeant Ryan T. Daggett of Greeley Colo. currently serves with the U.S. Air Force’s 8th Security Forces Squadron in South Korea. When stationed in Portugal, he witnessed a collision involving three vehicles and nine local nationals. Without hesitation, he established priorities of care and identified a nonresponsive victim trapped inside a vehicle. He pried open the disabled door, extricated the passenger and rendered critical treatment. These immediate actions preserved a life. On a separate occasion, Staff Sergeant Daggett saved a fellow paratrooper’s life by freeing him after becoming entangled within his parachute.

5. Coast Guardsman of the Year: Boatswain’s Mate Third Class Gerrod J. Britton of Plattsmouth, Neb. serves with the U.S. Coast Guard at Station Morro Bay. While off-duty, he witnessed a car



To learn more, visit uso.org/stories.

crash and jumped into immediate action, contacting emergency response and extracting two of the men trapped inside the vehicle. The third passenger, severely injured, was trapped underneath the vehicle when it began to catch fire. He and another bystander lifted the vehicle on its side. This allowed BM3 Britton to rescue the unconscious passenger through a broken window seconds before the vehicle was completely engulfed in

flames. He performed CPR and attempted to control bleeding from multiple severe injuries.

6. National Guardsman of the Year: Sergeant Francisco Javier Luna of Springfield, Mass. serves with the Massachusetts National Guard’s 972nd Military Policy Company. While performing his civilian occupation duties as a law enforcement officer, he and fellow officers received a 911 dispatcher call that a young child

had stopped breathing. Sergeant Luna performed infant CPR while waiting on emergency medical services. His calm demeanor and steadfast leadership were critical in saving the baby.

To learn more, visit uso.org/stories.

“Putting the mission first and doing the right thing embody the USO’s core values. We congratulate the honorees for their outstanding contributions,” says Crouch.

Cold and flu season tips to keep medicine out of young children’s reach

(StatePoint) A recent study found that approximately three in four emergency visits for accidents related to over-the-counter cold and flu medicines among young children were made after a child got into the medicine on their own. Are all of your medicines kept somewhere safe? With a potentially tough cold and flu season upon us, experts are urging parents and caregivers to remember to keep medicines up and away and out of sight and reach of young children.

“During cold and flu season, seven in 10 people will reach for over-the-counter medicines to treat fevers, sinus headaches and other unwelcome symptoms. That’s a lot of additional medication in the home. Kids are curious, so parents and caregivers should take

care to put medicines up and away, out of reach and sight of young children -- after every dose,” says Mary Leonard, managing director, Consumer Healthcare Products Association Educational Foundation.

The Up and Away campaign is an initiative of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and its PROTECT Initiative, in partnership with the Consumer Healthcare Products Association Educational Foundation. The campaign aims to prevent accidental ingestion of medicine in young children by reminding families to follow these tips:

- Keep medicines, including those carried in purses, bags, pockets or pill organizers, in a safe location that is too



Photo courtesy of StatePoint

Never leave medicines or vitamins out on a counter, table or at a sick child’s bedside. To a young child, pills can look like candy and liquid medicines can look like sugary drinks.

high for curious, young children to reach or see.

- Never leave medicines or vitamins out on a counter, table or at a sick child’s bedside. To a young child, pills can look like candy and liquid medicines can look like sugary drinks.
- At home or away, keep medicines in child-resistant containers until right before you take them.
- If your medicine has a locking cap that turns, twist it until you can’t twist anymore or hear the “click.”
- Teach children what medicine is and why you or another caregiver must be the one to give it to them.
- Remind babysitters, houseguests, and visitors to keep purses, bags, suitcases or coats that have medicines in them

up and away and out of sight when they’re in your home.

Save the Poison Help number (800-222-1222) in your phone, so you have it when and if you need it. Make sure that babysitters, older children, grandparents and frequent family visitors have this information too, in case there’s an emergency when they’re in charge. Call Poison Help right away if you think your child might have gotten into a medicine or vitamin, even if you are not completely sure. You can also visit poison.org. To learn more and for additional free resources, visit upandaway.org.

This cold and flu season and year-round, keep children safe by keeping medicine up and away and out of the sight and reach of young children.

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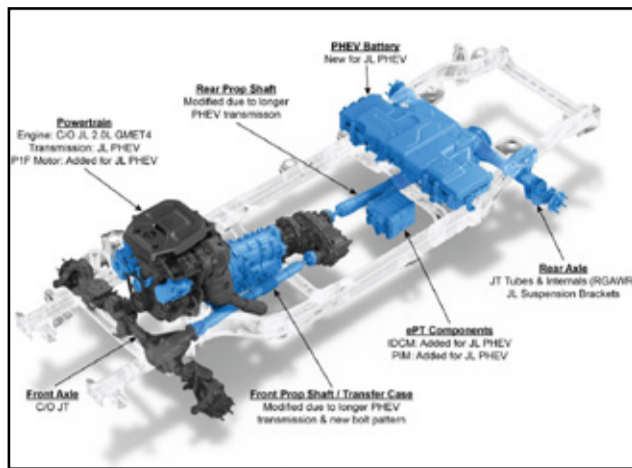
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Photos courtesy of "Jeep"

2022 Jeep Wrangler 4xe sticks its finger in a light socket

One might argue it has taken Jeep way too long to embrace the coming age of electric vehicles, especially since Chrysler has offered a plug-in mini-van for years. Its destination will be paved with all-electric vehicles foreshadowed by the Wrangler Magneto concept and a slew of car-based models derived from Fiat and Peugeot architecture, but the 2022 Wrangler 4xe at least sticks its finger in the light socket.

Like regular Wrangler hybrids, the 4xe employs a 2.0-liter turbocharged four-cylinder engine, batteries, and motors, but it can be plugged in for 22 miles of all-electric range – perfect for quick errands or driving to work. Output is a robust 375 horsepower and 470 lb.-ft. of torque, so clawing up the side of a mountain (or launching onto a freeway) will require little effort. Fuel economy is rated 49-MPGe after plugging in and 20-MPG otherwise. Drivers choose whether they want to run as a hybrid, full EV, or save electricity for later (after for city driving).

The 4xe is essentially a fleet fuel economy play, but with real benefits to drivers. You're still shoving a heavy brick through the air, but now that's done gracefully. Still a real Jeep, the Rubicon has rock crawl gearing, locking front/rear axles, and disconnecting sway bars for maximum wheel articulation. Add to that skid plates to protect sensitive bits and deep off-road tires to go wherever you want. Jeep did an admirable job of taming the dual solid axles, and it's much better behaved, but will still bounce over rough roads and trails.

From the trailhead, only subtle updates differentiate the 4xe from other Wrangler Rubicons. It has the same iconic seven-slat grille, snarling hood vents, beaming round LED headlamps, metal bumpers, and reinforced side sills. It radiates attitude in Hydro Blue paint. Look closer, though, and you'll notice light blue tow hooks instead of red ones plus a charging port on the driver's front fender. Notice unique 17" wheels and nearly indestructible Gorilla Glass windshield.

Even with hard sides, this Rubicon opens to the world quickly. Doors can be easily disconnected and removed. Wranglers are available with fully retractable soft tops and ones with removable hard panels, but my favorite is this one that retracts a full-width canvas panel to beyond the rear seats with one press of a button – perfect for enjoying some sunshine at a leisurely pace with the ability to seal up quickly when hitting the highway.

The interior is wash-out rugged, but enhanced with leather seats, stitched

dash coverings, and Alpine premium audio with sound bar. Apple CarPlay, Android Auto, and 4G Wi-Fi ease device connections. Infotainment is controlled through an intuitive touchscreen with icons for climate, audio, navigation, and phone plus key redundant buttons below and voice commands. I appreciated the dual-zone automatic climate control, but would have appreciated heated seats more. Safety is enhanced with adaptive cruise, auto emergency braking, blind spot warning, and rear cross path detection.

It took time for Jeep to find socket, but the iconic Wrangler was a good place to start. The 4xe is plenty rugged, but with a debonair flair given the upscale interior and styling tweaks. Cruising through town on electric power, you can hardly believe you're driving a Jeep. Of course, all of this comes at a price. The base 4xe starts at \$51,225,

2022 Jeep Wrangler 4xe

5-passengers, 4WD SUV
Powertrain: 2.0-LT4, hybrid
Output: 375 hp/470 lb.-ft.
Suspension f/r: Solid axles
Wheels f/r: 17"/17" alloy
Brakes f/r: disc/disc
Must-have features: MPGs, Capability
Fuel economy: 49-MPGe
Assembly: Toledo, OH
Base/as-tested price: \$51,225/69,545



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