

Expedition offers comfort and style in large SUV category

Continued from 13B

drive. My only gripe about the engine is that it's a bit loud. There's too much noise making its way into the otherwise serene cabin.

The Expedition's off-road manners are very good. It can more than hold its own with

any 4x4. But most people who purchase one of these things will be more interested in its people-hauling skills. It gets an A-plus in that department, not only because of the generous space, but because of the wonderful highway manners. The Expedition will satisfy the most ardent station wagon proponents. Yes it's hefty, but

Ford schooled the suspension in the social graces and it never gets out of line. The Expedition can be navigated around curvy mountainous roads or everyday traffic with the same ease. It's easy enough to park, and if you order the optional air suspension, it rides as good as a Lincoln Continental.

It has nearly as many features as a Continental. Dual air bags, standard four-wheel anti-lock brakes, four-position automatic 4x4 system and dual climate controls for front and rear passengers.

It also nearly matches the Lincoln in cost. The base price is \$33,875. A special equip-

ment package included lighted running boards, power mirrors with built-in turn signal indicators, 17-inch cast aluminum wheels, Ford Mach Audio system with cassette and the Triton engine added \$2,155. Other options included a high capacity air conditioner (\$705), third row seat (\$855) and CD changer (which

skipped violently, \$474). With destination and a \$750 package discount, the as-tested price came to \$37,775.

Gracious, that's a lot for a truck, but goodness, this is one great truck. Ford has set the new benchmark in full-size sport utility vehicles. This was certainly worth waiting for.

Dealers need to improve customer relations skills

Continued from 13B

efficient processes."

Gieszl said dealers also need to:

- Work with manufacturers to make the ordering and delivery of new cars more efficient and less costly, in part through better use of computer technology.
- Better understand buying patterns so their inventories

match what customers want to buy.

• Hire more minorities to better serve and understand their customers.

• "One-size-fits-all" retailing

won't work anymore," Gieszl said. "You must tailor your operations to serve customers the way they want to be served. ... Your future depends on it."

Chrysler likes air bag switch

By Catherine O'Brien
THE CHARLOTTE POST

WASHINGTON — In a change of position, Chrysler Corp. has decided to install cut-off switches for passenger-side air bags in some pickups and sports cars that have no back seat.

Ford Motor Co. installed the cut-off switches in some of its pickups without back seats starting with the 1996 model year. General Motors Corp. followed suit with 1997 pickups.

Chrysler officials had initially decided against it, saying a switch sent a mixed message to customers about air bags which were saving lives every day.

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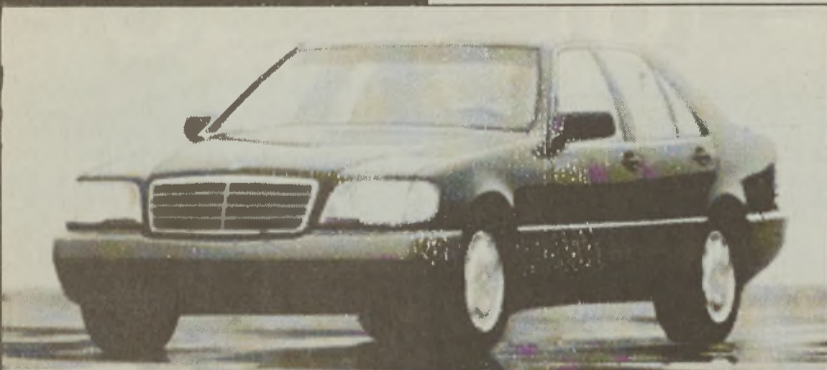
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