Kelley Blue Book Provides Summer Road Trip Tips as Gas Prices Remain High in Advance of July 4 Holiday Weekend

Experts Emphasize Importance of Vehicle Preparation, Maintenance, Child Safety and More

ATLANTA, June 29, 2022 – While gas prices remain high leading up to one of the busiest summer travel weekends, millions of Americans are preparing to hit the road to celebrate the Fourth of July holiday. To help ensure road-trippers are prepared for a safe and enjoyable vacation, Kelley Blue Book, a Cox Automotive company, today announces its Summer Driving Checklist and Safety Tips.

Rising inflation and higher fuel costs will not deter Americans from road travel during the upcoming holiday weekend. According to AAA, an estimated 42 million people will hit America's roads for the Fourth of July weekend, a new record surpassing pre-pandemic levels by 1.1%. That figure is slightly higher than 2021, and it represents 87.6% of all travelers during the holiday travel period from Thursday, June 30 to Monday, July 4, 2022.

Last year during the July 4 weekend, travelers could fill up their tanks for about $3.07 per gallon on average at stations across the United States. As of this writing, gas prices remain about $4.96 per gallon on average. With many families driving large SUVs, trucks and RVs on vacation, the cost of long road trips this summer could nearly rival that of plane tickets, which also continue to rise in price. Before heading out, Kelley Blue Book recommends that road trippers check local gas station prices using their favorite gas app, and electric-car drivers should map out their route and locate charging stations ahead of time.

"Heading into the busy July 4 holiday travel weekend, gas prices remain high throughout the country yet still seem more palatable to many travelers compared to the climbing costs of airfare," said Brian Moody, executive editor for Kelley Blue Book. "As people hit the road this summer seeking a much-needed getaway, doing a little pre-road-trip preparation can go a long way to help ensure a smooth vacation. Making sure your car is up to date with service and maintenance, stocking the car with essentials like phone chargers, a first aid kit, water and snacks can help little incidents from becoming a bigger issue. Keeping child safety and hot car awareness top of mind is also imperative so tiny road-trippers arrive safely at their destination. Even if the entire trip is smooth sailing, Kelley Blue Book's helpful summer road trip checklist can ease the process and provide families with some peace of mind."

Before hitting the road, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and the experts from Kelley Blue Book recommend the following **Tips for a Safe and Enjoyable Road Trip**:

- **Inspect and Maintain Your Vehicle –** Routine vehicle maintenance is a must. Perform a basic check of your vehicle's tire pressure, wiper blades, fluid levels, lights and air conditioning. Do not defer regularly scheduled service like oil changes, battery checks and tire rotations; being diligent goes a long way toward preventing breakdowns. If anything seems amiss, visit Kelley Blue Book's vehicle maintenance pricing and services scheduling page to see if your car is due. Learn more about what to expect for your vehicle's service and maintenance costs with the Kelley Blue Book Service Advisor.
- **Prepare an Emergency Roadside Kit and Be Prepared for Contingency Plans –** Be prepared for any contingency, because plans can change without

warning and even a well-maintained vehicle can break down. Prepare an emergency roadside kit to take with you and remember that a cell phone is the most critical emergency item so you can call for help when and where you need it. Be sure to include an extra portable cell phone battery charger in your emergency roadside kit, so you can plug in your phone even if the car does not work.

- **Check for Recalls –** Millions of Americans are driving cars that may have safety recalls. Use Kelley Blue Book's VIN recall check tool to ensure your vehicle is ready to go. If you find a recall for your car, get it fixed right away. Dealerships always will perform recall repairs for free, but their service bays can get swamped ahead of a busy travel season, so check as early as possible to see if your car needs any free repairs.
- **Know the Car –** While you likely know your own vehicle pretty well at this point, a rental car can be much different. If you are renting a vehicle, pick it up a few hours before the road trip so you can familiarize yourself by getting to know the different kinds of driver assists and safety features the car has to offer.

Once road trippers are on their way, Kelley Blue Book offers the following **On-the-Road Trip Safety Tips:**

- **Make Child Safety Your Top Concern, Including Hot Car Awareness –** All children under 13 years old should ride in the back seat. Be sure you are following all child safety seat instructions closely. Keep hot car awareness top of mind. Being on vacation can interrupt routines and distract you from checking the backseat when exiting the vehicle. Tragically, heatstroke deaths claim an average of 38 children in the United States each year. Pets also are in grave danger when left in a car, even for a short period with the windows cracked. NHTSA reminds everyone to keep their loved ones safe with tips like locking your car when not in use to prevent children from entering, never leave a child alone in the car (even if you think you only will be away only for a moment), and always "look before you lock" so no child or animal remains in the backseat.
- **Drive at Non-Peak Times and Limit Nighttime Driving –**Late afternoon and early evening can be the busiest times to drive, and plan accordingly to avoid peak traffic times on long holiday weekends. Limiting nighttime driving is wise to help avoid fatigue and potentially dangerous situations when it is harder to see on the road. If you feel fatigue coming on, stop and rest or switch drivers before putting yourself and others at risk.
- **Let Passengers Handle Traffic Apps and Entertainment–** For safety's sake, keep your hands on the wheel and your eyes on the road. Avoid multi-tasking by putting a passenger in charge of navigation apps and the music or podcast selection.
- **Take Frequent Breaks and Switch Drivers–** Occasionally getting out of the car is good for everyone, especially the driver. The best way to avoid fatigue behind the wheel is a regular change of scenery. If your road trip involves multiple qualified drivers, let everyone take a turn handling the driving and relaxing as a passenger.
- **Share the Road –** Good weather attracts many roadway users, including motorcyclists, bicyclists and pedestrians. Because they are more vulnerable without the protection that a car or truck provides, be extra diligent. Leave more distance between you and a motorcycle – at least 3- or 4-seconds worth. Always signal your intentions before changing lanes or merging, so other roadway users can anticipate your movement and find a safe lane position.
- **Buckle Up –** While it may seem unbelievable that we still need to say this in the year 2022, always buckle up. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, accidents remain one of the top leading causes of death for Americans. Give yourself and your loved ones a fighting chance and obey this important traffic law.
- **Pack Masks –** Whether everyone in your car is vaccinated or not, due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic you may need masks in some shops, restaurants or attractions you visit. To make things easy, keep masks on hand in the car for everyone traveling.

For more summer 2022 road trip tips and information from Kelley Blue Book, visit https://www.kbb.com/car-advice/road-trip-vehicle-safety-tips/.

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Media Contact:
Lisa Aloisio
Lisa.Aloisio@coxautoinc.com
404-725-0651

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