

Colorado and Arizona are almost exactly the same size and have similar populations, with about half in each case living in a dominant metroplex. The two states touch at one point, literally. So travel distances vary from zero at Four Corners, to about 1200 miles from Yuma to the northeast corner just past Sterling, Colorado—overall not that much less than the near and far ends of Texas.

Colorado vehicle purposes and tastes have a high degree of overlap with ours—all the moreso when you compare theirs to Arizona's higher elevations, with snow, cold and more two-lane highways.

The Rocky Mountain Automotive Press (RMAP) awards Vehicle(s) of the Year in car, truck and SUV categories—assessing value, performance, fuel economy, comfort and safety—among vehicles considered significantly new or updated. This is not a comparative drive event. Rather, a committee nominates three finalists in each category, from more than 120 vehicles members have already driven to evaluate. The full membership then votes, with winners announced in time for the Denver Auto Show in April. These are:

RMAP 2014 Rocky Mountain Car of the Year
2014 Lexus IS250/350—“for advanced design and technology, 2.5 and 3.5-liter V6 power and all-wheel drive.”

• *Other finalists: Chevrolet Impala, Mazda3.*

OUR TAKE: Arizona votes would likely be different—Lexus won for its AWD, in Colorado (we're surprised all finalists didn't have this there, in fact).

RMAP 2014 Rocky Mountain Truck of the Year
2014 Chevrolet Silverado—“for its range of powerful and efficient engines, high-quality cabin and advanced construction.”

• *Other finalists: Ram 2500, Toyota Tundra.*

OUR TAKE: Ford wasn't included? Ram didn't win?

RMAP 2014 Rocky Mountain SUV of the Year
(Includes crossovers and body-on-frame SUVs)
2014 Jeep Cherokee—“for exceptional efficiency, off-road capability, craftsmanship and user-friendly technology in the mid-size SUV class.”

• *Others: Range Rover Sport, Subaru Forester.*

OUR TAKE: These three vehicles would make any body want a three-car garage. Winners, all.

RMAP also holds two comparative drive events: the Rocky Mountain Drive Experience in June—one day off-road, one on the track—and 4xFall in September. ■

RMAP Vehicles of the Year



CAR OF THE YEAR WINNER: 2014 Lexus IS 250/350; other finalists Chevrolet Impala, Mazda3.
TRUCK OF THE YEAR: 2014 Chevrolet Silverado; other finalists Ram 2500, Toyota Tundra.
SUV OF THE YEAR (bottom): 2014 Jeep Cherokee; other finalists Range Rover Sport, Subaru Forester.

