

# Lightning strikes in a new spot

Pickups are the biggest selling segment in the nation, and full battery electric vehicles have been getting all the buzz. It seems natural to combine the two. Many a new startup has begun from scratch, and existing players of all sizes promise to be delivering EV pickups soon—many very pricey.

Ford sits atop the F-150, the single best selling vehicle of all, so rather than invent something all-new, their approach is to electrify their top known entity. After a couple of years of high profile teases—remember the prototype towing a million-plus-pound train two years ago?—here it is.

Bringing a name from their performance pickup past, Ford introduces the F-150 Lightning. With 563 hp from dual in-board motors, this beast has 775 lb-ft of torque (the most ever in an F-150), a zero-to-60 time in the mid-4s, and up to 2,000 pounds of payload and 10,000 pounds tow capacity. 4x4 is standard. The frame is all new, built with the strongest steel ever used in an F-150 frame, and the truck has a new independent rear suspension—all together promising the familiar durability and tough-terrain capability people expect.

Driving range is estimated at 230 miles standard or 300 with an extended-range battery. Ford seeks to turn any range anxiety questions on their head, by promoting that the F-150 Lightning has

power to spare—a high-tech front trunk (frunk) with four 120-volt outlets and two USB chargers, promising enough on-the-spot output to power your home for three days in a blackout—or to fire up a massive tailgate party (the frunk also has a drainable floor).

Along with power comes connectivity: over-the-air software updates; a FordPass app for remote vehicle controls and charging station access; available BlueCruise for hands-free driving on the highway; and enhanced Pro Power Onboard to power your tools or toys at the jobsite or campsite.

The lineup starts with the work-oriented F-150 Lightning Pro at \$39,974 (before any applicable tax credits). A mid-series XLT starts at \$52,974, with Lariat and Platinum grades above that.

The F-150's big presence comes with a burden of expectations. Ford seems to have tackled this by moving beyond the simple question, “can you make this electric?” to “what can we do with this, special, *because* it's electric?” The answer is: a lot.

This approach has led to pre-order sales passing the 100,000 mark in just the first few weeks.

The F-150 Lightning, built in a new high-tech, sustainable practices factory at Ford's River Rouge complex in Dearborn, joins Mustang Mach-E and Ford Transit in the growing Ford EV family. ■

