

# When ya gotta, ya gotta

BY JOE SAGE

Meet the 2023 GMC Sierra 1500 AT4X AEV Edition, almost the same as the AT4X we had just five months ago (in which we had a ball, as you can see in our March-April issue). Billed by GM as the “most off-road capable factory Sierra 1500 ever,” the AT4X AEV shares its fundamentals with the AT4X, already up-spec’ed from the non-X AT4—a 420-hp 6.2L EcoTec3 V8 and 10-speed automatic, selectable electronic differentials front and rear, one-pedal rock-crawling mode, 33-inch Goodyear Wrangler Territory M/T tires, two inches

of factory lift and three inches of increased ground clearance, and advanced dampers and springs for improved handling on all roads, even the roughest.

If the GMC AT4 is a Sierra 1500 on steroids, it follows that the AT4X is an AT4 on steroids, and the AEV Edition, in turn, an AT4X on steroids.

The \$6895 package that makes this an AEV Edition includes upgrades shown in the callout below. (The 33-inch Goodyear Wranglers—important as they are to the look and feel and the build itself—are included as a bragging point here, though they are also on the non-AEV AT4X.)

Conversely of note, though our AT4X last spring had noticeably different styling up front, the two

now look virtually identical, as the AT4X itself now includes the same bumper and winch prep as the upgraded AT4X AEV Edition.

But there’s still plenty else to distinguish the AEV build, much of which adds not so much new capabilities as additional armor on the trail.

The AEV Edition performs largely the same duty as the non-AEV AT4X, even if you plan to traverse a bit more hazardous terrain. Skid plates aren’t for the intent of bashing, after all—they’re for protection in case of bashing. But this can happen, and it’s always great to have more protection.

We took a long off-highway drive into the Four Peaks backcountry in the AT4X last spring, with a

bit less dirt and more ‘round town in the AEV Edition this time, not inappropriate, as even the most avid off-roader will likely do plenty of the same. As with our prior AT4X, it proved to be tops on power, performance and handling, surprisingly parkable and its cabin loaded with premium touches.

Last spring, the non-AEV AT4X had become the top-priced Sierra 1500, by just a hair above Denali Ultimate, after having been second-highest not long prior, also by just a hair. Add the AEV level to the AT4X, and this is now decidedly higher than the Denali Ultimate (though note that the AEV Edition seems to be presented some places as a separate trim level, others as an AT4X option package).

Thus the top builds—the AT4X pair (top tier off-roaders with a huge share of luxury) and the Denali pair (the inverse of that)—are highly interwoven. But Denali buyers know who they are, as do dedicated off-road buyers, so if your spirits are boost-

ed by having the neighborhood’s top dog driveway, you can’t go wrong with any of them.

In this neck of the woods, big-tired big-wheeled big pickups are a very competitive set, in both style and function. Most have long been custom modifications, but it’s great that you can now also get one from the factory, fully warrantied and serviceable, that keeps up with the best—and now with more features and another choice.

The fun is in deciding which version is the reference point and which is the variant. You can see this as an AT4X with AEV Edition as an add-on—or you can see the AT4X AEV Edition as the point of departure, from which you might strip off its extras. It’s a comparison that’s part specific need, part budget and surely part emotion.

Two versions of AT4X might seem at first to create a dilemma. But we’re thinking it offers more opportunities than ever. ■

## AEV EDITION INCLUSIONS

- AEV stamped steel front and rear bumpers with heavy duty recovery points and front winch capability
- Five hot-stamped boron steel skid plates
- Race-inspired, laser-engraved 18-inch AEV Salta gloss black wheels with AEV recessed valve system
- 33-inch Goodyear Wrangler Territory M/T tires
- Updated front grille and fascia, gloss black door handles and black contrast inner tailgate
- Available off-road rocker panel protectors and optional bolt-on step assist when not off-roading



## SPECIFICATIONS

|                                      |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| ASSEMBLY .....                       | Silao, Guanajuato, Mexico  |
| ENGINE / TRANSMISSION .....          | USA / USA  |
| PARTS CONTENT .....                  | 33% US/Can / 38% Mexico  |
| BUILD .....                          | crew cab / short box / 4WD   |
| ENGINE .....                         | 6.2L EcoTec3 V8 VVT DI with Dynamic Fuel Management, alum/alum, OHV 16v VVT, direct high-pressure fuel inj   |
| HP/TORQUE .....                      | 420 hp / 460 lb-ft   |
| COMPRESSION RATIO ..(per 2022 specs) | 11.5:1   |
| TRANSMISSION .....                   | Hydra-Matic 10-spd auto  |
| DRIVETRAIN .....                     | 4x4  |
| TRANSFER CASE .....                  | 2-spd with e-locking front & rear differentials  |
| AXLE RATIO .....                     | 3.23   |
| SUSPENSION .....                     | 2-inch lift on AT4X, Multimatic DSSV dampers.  |
|                                      | F: independent coil-over-shock w twin-tube shocks; R: solid axle w semi-elliptic, variable-rate, two-stage multileaf springs, splayed twin-tube shocks |
| STEERING .....                       | elec pwr-assist rack & pinion  |
| BRAKES .....                         | vented: F: 13x1.18; R: 13.6x0.79   |
| WHEELS .....                         | 18-in 12-spoke high gloss black aluminum   |
| TIRES .....                          | 33-inch LT275/70R18 Goodyear Wrangler Territory M/T  |
| LENGTH / WHEELBASE ..(cc/sb)         | 231.9 / 147.4  |
| GROUND CLEARANCE .....               | 11.0 in  |
| APPR / BRKVR / DEPART .....          | 32.5 / 23.0 / 23.4°  |
| TURNING CIRCLE .....                 | (AT4X) 47.3 ft   |
| HEADROOM (F/R) .....                 | 43.0 / 40.1 in   |
| LEGROOM (F/R) .....                  | 44.5 / 43.4 in   |
| BED LENGTH .....                     | (short box) 5'8"   |
| BASE CURB WEIGHT .....               | (AT4X) 5780 lb   |
| MAX GVWR .....                       | (AT4X) 7100 lb   |
| BASE PAYLOAD .....                   | (AT4X) 1290 lb   |
| TOW CAPACITY .....                   | (AT4X) 8700 lb   |
| FUEL / CAPACITY .....                | premium unl / 24 gal   |
| MPG .....                            | 14/17/15 (city/hwy/comb)   |

BASE PRICE (AT4X) .....\$81,700

AEV EDITION: AEV hot-stamped boron steel skid plates (front approach, steering gear, transfer case, fuel tank and rear differential); AEV stamped-steel rear bumper; 12-spoke high gloss black aluminum wheels w AEV center cap; rocker protection; AEV all-weather floor liners; AEV branded front head restraints and tailgate decal.....6895

PAINT: Deep Bronze Metallic .....495

(CREDIT); not equipped w steering column lock .....(50)

DESTINATION CHARGE.....1895

TOTAL .....\$90,935

NOTE: check for any more recent price changes.

## 2023 SIERRA 1500 VARIABLES

Lineup .....Pro, SLE, Elevation, SLT, AT4, Denali, AT4X, Denali Ultimate, AT4X AEV Edition

Engines .....2.7L turbo-4 high output, 5.3L V8, 6.2L V8, 3.0L I-6 turbo-diesel

Transmissions .....8-spd auto, 10-spd auto

Cabs .....short 5'8", standard 6'6", long 8'0"

Beds .....(var. by cab) Regular, Double, Crew

Wheels .....17, 18, 20, 22-inch

Tires .....A/S, A/T, Goodyear Wrangler M/T

Tow capacity .....8,900 to 13,100 lb

Fuel capacity .....(var. by bed) 24.0 or 28.3 gal

Base price range .....\$37,200 to \$88,595