

Mountain driving is no biggie if you take it easy

By Kathryn Reed

Driving into Lake Tahoe after a major dump isn't the nightmare newscasters off the hill make it out to be. I know. I did it Monday afternoon.

It took longer, sure, but it wasn't scary. I wasn't some place I shouldn't have been. The only thing that was upsetting was not being able to fill up on gas in Placerville before heading into the mountains. I like to do that just in case I get stuck and need to leave the engine running to stay warm.



Snow covers
the foothills
Dec. 7.
Photo/Kathryn
Reed

Placerville was without electricity – so gas pumps couldn't work.

It was a magical sight to see snow as I crested a hill before El Dorado Hills. I don't remember seeing snow that low before. Mixed with the golden grasses of the foothills, it was almost surreal.

The white stuff kept accumulating as I headed east. Trees not

used to snow were weighted down, some literally on the ground. Limbs looked like they were about to split.

Chains were required on the east side of Placerville. The pavement was dry there, but not much farther up the road was slick and white.

A few vehicle drove by way too fast – seeming to be exceeding the speed limit. Most of us kept a moderate pace up the mountain.

The American River is dotted with what looks like large snowballs, but in reality are boulders covered with snow.

Occasionally the sun peaked out. Flurries were in pockets along the way. Visibility decreased severely at one point.

Driving in the mountains just takes patience – which gives one plenty of time to enjoy the scenery. But it was also reassuring to know I had a shovel, blanket, food, water and clothing in the Jeep just in case it wasn't an uneventful excursion back home.

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