

# Twenty Years of Tundra

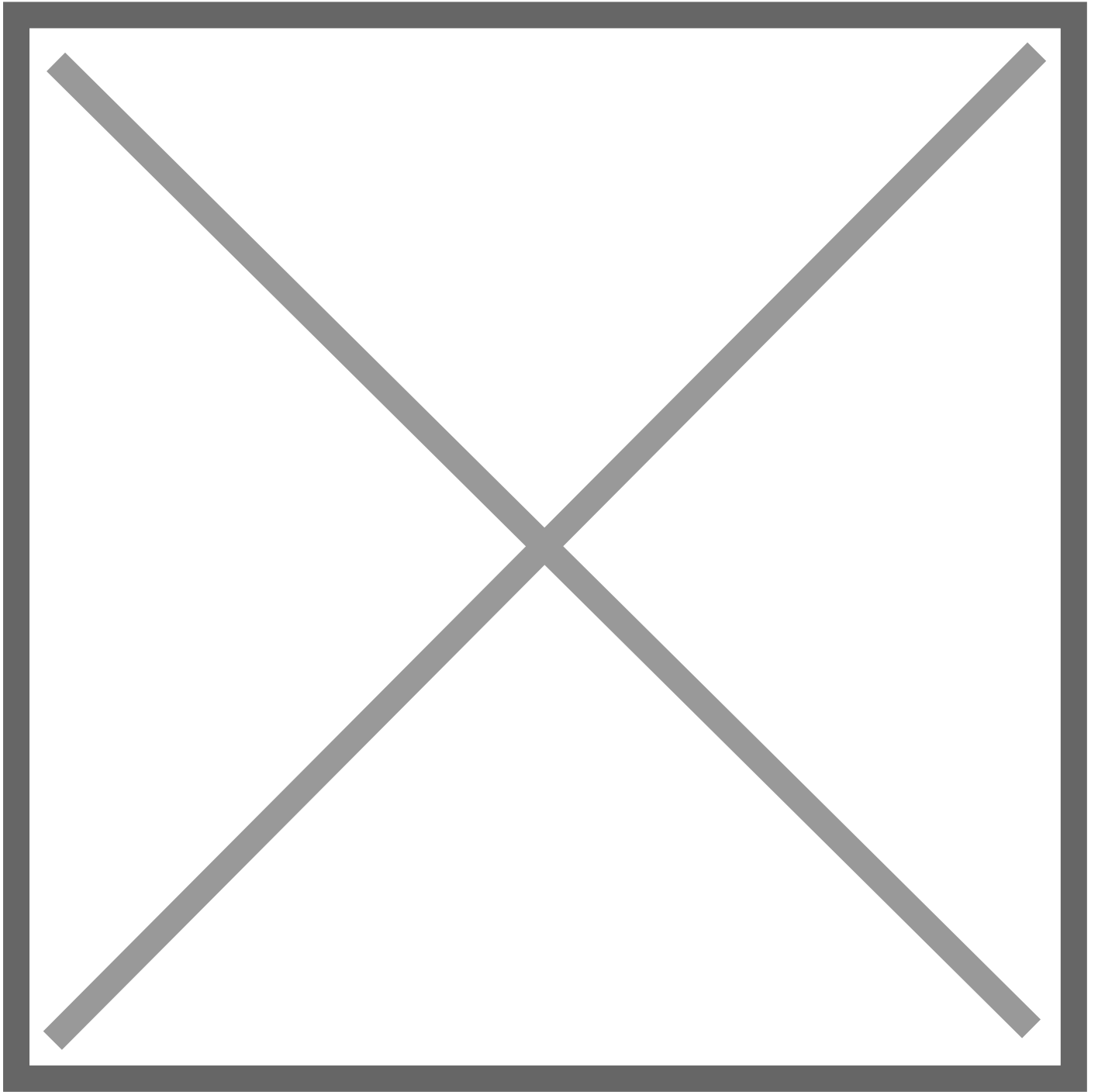
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The Tundra was the first-ever full-size pickup truck built by a Japanese automaker in North America. Production began in May 1999 at Toyota Motor Manufacturing, Indiana (TMMI), before moving to the Toyota Motor Manufacturing, Texas (TMMTX) plant in San Antonio in 2008. It's still assembled there today and remains the

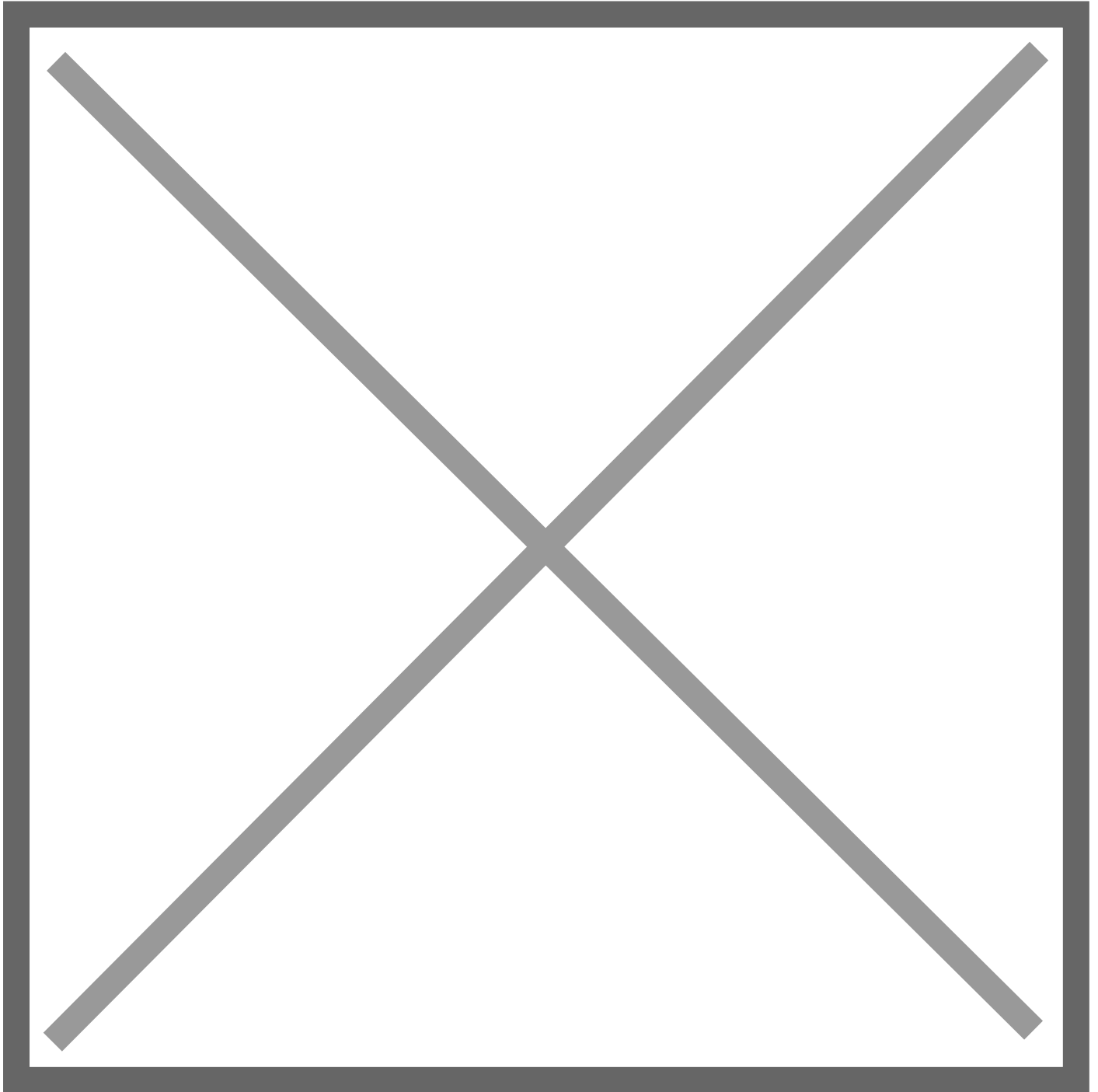
only full-size pickup truck made in Texas.



*Indiana Roots – The Tundra is assembled at Toyota Motor Manufacturing, Texas, but it originated at Toyota Motor Manufacturing, Indiana. In fact, if you visit TMMI, you'll see the first Tundra to ever roll off the assembly line – it's parked in the lobby!*

**Humble Beginnings**

When announcing the Tundra to the world in 1998, Toyota stayed true to the truck's Indiana roots: It was unveiled at the Indiana State Fair. "Today marks the beginning of the launch of one of the most important vehicles ever introduced in the 41 years we've sold cars and trucks here in America," said Don Esmond, who at the time served as Toyota Motor Sales group vice president and general manager, Toyota Division. "It needed to be built in America because it needed to offer better value."



*Head of the Pack –When Toyota introduced Tundra to the market 20 years ago, it challenged what was possible for the segment. Its towing capacity and fuel economy were both market leaders that set Tundra apart from other*

*full-size pickup trucks.*

### **Making History**

When production began 20 years ago, Tundra pushed boundaries and raised expectations for what full-size pickup trucks could do. Under the hood, it had the most sophisticated power-plant ever offered in its class, including the first double-overhead cam, 32-valve V8 in the segment. It was also the first V8 engine to achieve an L.E.V (low emission vehicle) emissions classification from the EPA. Its engine provided the strength to haul a maximum payload of nearly one ton, and pull a maximum towing capacity of 7,200 pounds depending on the model and level of equipment.



*Oversize Load – A stock Tundra CrewMax 4×4 towed the Endeavour Space Shuttle through Los Angeles back in 2012, spawning the bumper sticker below.*



### **Out of this World**

Of course, that all came in handy several years later – when the space shuttle *Endeavour* needed a ride across the nation’s busiest freeway. In 2012, a stock Tundra CrewMax 4×4 with no special modifications towed the *Endeavour* and a custom-built dolly across a bridge spanning the 405. The setup weighed 292,000 pounds and took about five minutes. The trip was part of the shuttle’s 12-mile journey from Los Angeles International Airport to the California Science Center.

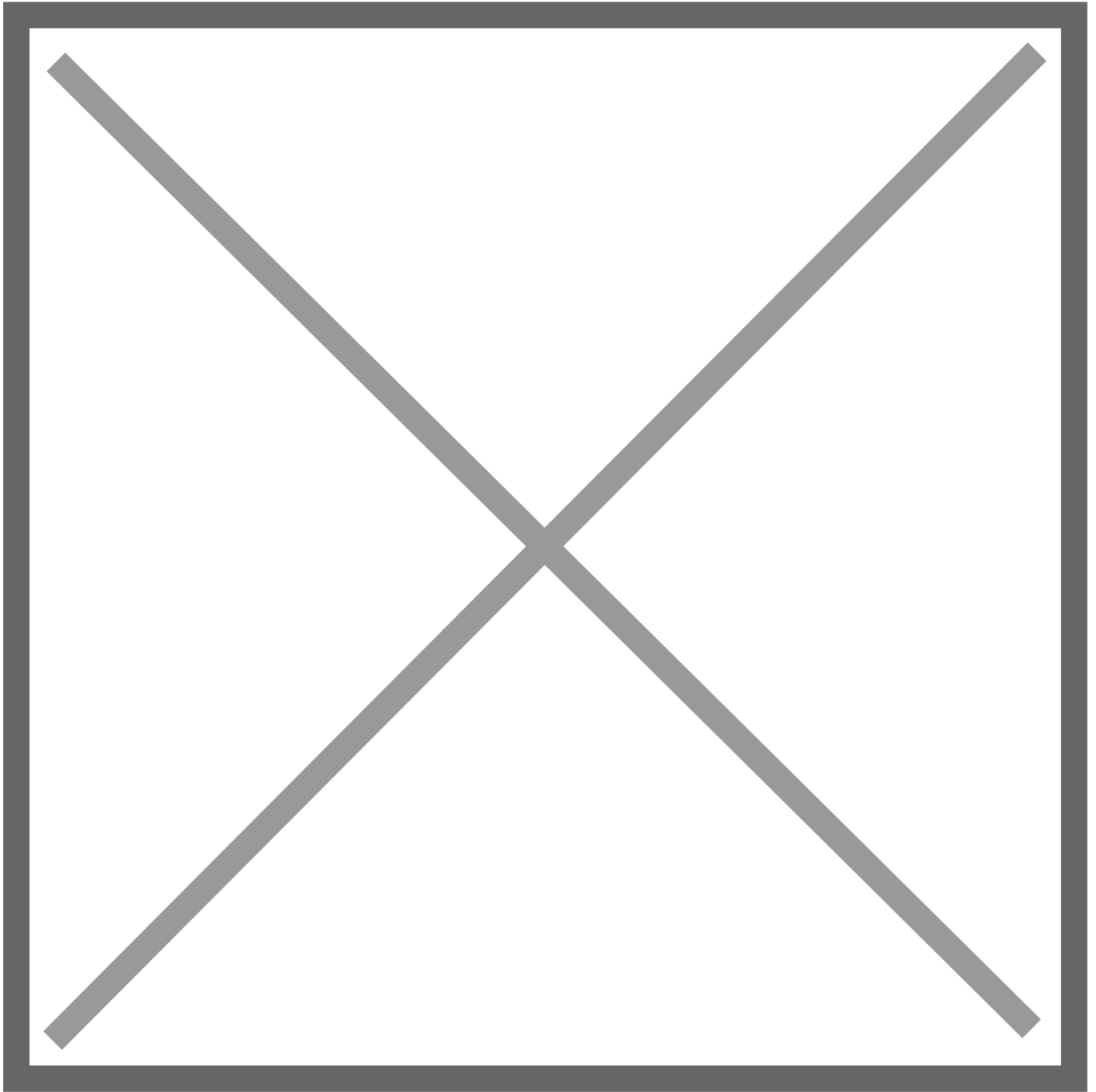


*Built to Run –Victor Sheppard stands in front of his 2007 Tundra, built at TMMTX in San Antonio. He logged more than a million miles on the odometer, driving his truck for work. In 2016, Toyota traded his truck in for a new one, so engineers could study its longevity and durability.*

### **A Million Miles and Counting**

Tundras are built to last. Just ask Victor Sheppard. His 2007 Tundra was among the first of its kind manufactured at TMMTX, and he averaged about 125,000 miles of driving each year. By 2016, it had more than

a million miles on the odometer. When Toyota learned of the milestone, they offered Sheppard a new Tundra in exchange for his old one – so engineers could get a look under the hood and learn how the vehicle had held up after so many miles. Read more about what they found [here](#).



***Close Call*** – Nurse Allyn Pierce poses with his 2018 Toyota Tundra. Pierce was driving the truck when he narrowly escaped the deadly Camp Fire in California. Pierce drove through flames to save several people trapped at a nearby hospital.



## **Through the Flames**

In 2018, a heroic ICU nurse ferried several people to safety through a deadly California wildfire in his Tundra. Allyn Pierce had safely evacuated the Camp Fire – the deadliest wildfire in the state’s history – when he got word that patients and coworkers were trapped at the hospital where he worked. Pierce immediately turned his truck around – eventually making multiple round trips to get as many people out as possible. His Tundra survived too, although it suffered significant body damage. Toyota replaced Pierce’s Tundra as a thank you for his life-saving heroism. Read more about the rescues [here](#).