

Wheels: An e-mail from B.W. says, "I have a 2001 Rodeo 4-cylinder, 2-wheel drive that has 55,000 miles on it. We have a little problem when putting the rodeo in a pull situation, like going up a hill or trying to pass someone, it skips! I have changed all the parts that I have been advised to and spent a lot of money on fuel filter, spark plugs, wires, EGR valve, coil pack, air flow sensor, timing idle pulley, and timing belt. Any clue as to what could cause this problem?"

Halderman: By "skipping," I am going to assume you mean that the engine misses as if it is not operating on all cylinders. Instead of replacing parts, I would have suggested that this problem be diagnosed to help pin down the problem before you spent a lot of money. For example, if there are some diagnostic trouble codes, this would lead to finding a problem. Even if no codes are set, a professional service technician would check fuel pressure and volume, plus looking carefully at the scan tool data when the problem is occurring can help pinpoint the problem. For example, the computer uses the information from the oxygen sensor to determine if any corrections are needed. These corrections are called fuel trim, and by looking at these numbers, a technician can determine if the problem is a lack of fuel or some other problem. For example, the fuel trim should be within 10 percent. Engine missing can also be caused by a weak ignition system or a weak signal from the crankshaft position sensor. To help avoid spending more money on parts, I think it would be money worth spent to have a professional look at the problem.

