

SANT AUTOMOTIVE NEWS VOL IX, NO. 2 "A BEACON OF AUTOMOTIVE HOPE IN A SEA OF AUTOMOTIVE DARKNESS."

Due to a surplus of actual news, the promised interview with Abe Spangler, Jr. and the related discussion of growing trends in the Florida alligator head market have been indefinitely postponed. The entire staff of *THE SANT AUTOMOTIVE NEWS* would like to apologize for the inconvenience and disappointment that this decision probably caused.

Safety and Emissions Tests

Effective September 4, 2007, only 1996 and newer model year vehicles will be emissions tested. The emissions inspection will consist of an OBD II test whereby the authorized inspector will merely access the vehicles' computer data port and verify that the on board diagnostic system is ready to operate and functioning properly. This will essentially be the same test that is currently being performed on 1996 and newer model years, except the test will be decentralized meaning that the inspections will again be performed by independent service facilities like *SANT AUTOMOTIVE*. To the disappointment of State Senator Charlie Shields and a frighteningly large number of Missouri motorists, the safety inspection program will remain in its current form. Fees for the two separate inspections will change little after September 4.

Vehicle Maintenance Charts Available Via E-Mail

In 2005, Sant Automotive developed Vehicle Maintenance Charts to better help our customers understand the maintenance needs of their vehicles. We believe that our charts are superior to other maintenance reminder systems because they contain both mileage and time based recommendations, they include services that have been performed as well as those that have not, and they help clarify the distinction between maintenance and repair. Many of you receive these charts with your newsletters. If you are not currently receiving a Vehicle Maintenance Chart with your newsletters, please let us know, and we will be happy to provide you with a complimentary chart. Whether you are currently receiving a chart or not, if you have any records that you would like to have incorporated in your charts, please let us know, and we would be happy to include them. To have additional records incorporated, either bring the records by the shop, or send an email to info@santauto.com. Also, if you would like an updated copy of your Vehicle Maintenance Chart at any time, just send us an e-mail to the address listed above, and we will send out a copy.

Technology Updates for 2007

To better and more quickly serve our customers, *SANT AUTOMOTIVE* has made some major technical improvements in the past year. Our high speed internet connection, coupled with our new shop management system now puts even more information at our fingertips. In addition to more quickly acquiring information such as repair, recall, and technical service bulletins, these changes allow us to more accurately check our suppliers' inventories and receive our parts even faster. This means even faster and more accurate repairs so that we can get our customers back on the road. Also, this information can be more conveniently transmitted to our customers. If, for example, we determine that a customer's vehicle is covered by a recall, with a few clicks of the mouse we can send specific recall information to our customers so that they can resolve

these matters with the manufacturer.

Refrigerant Update

Last year, due to manufacturing capacity limitations and increase demand for R134A in Red China, the price of air conditioning refrigerant rose dramatically. Thankfully, the Central Planning Committee has kicked up production. Sources tell *THE SANT AUTOMOTIVE NEWS* that several new production facilities in the Peking suburbs are putting out 134a in quantities that The Gang of Four could only have dreamed of. On the demand side, automotive air conditioning systems are built better than ever, so demand for refrigerant seems to be dropping. This is good news for consumers who can expect to pay less for air conditioning service next year.

Ready for Fall?

The hot St. Louis summer has done a number on a many of our customers' cars. Specific problems attributable to the heat that we have seen mainly fall into two categories: cooling systems and charging systems. Lack of cooling maintenance can cause a build up of corrosion within the system which reduces lubrication of components and can lead to electrolysis and failure of various parts like heater cores, radiators, and water pumps. High temperatures also affect electrical systems because the heat increases resistance with in the system causing batteries to discharge more quickly and alternators to fail. This punishment can weaken systems and make them more susceptible to failure this fall and winter. Do yourself a favor and get ready now.

Emissions Update

At T-Minus 14 days prior to the rollout of the new emissions program, we have a hold. It seems that a few problems have arisen. The equipment has not arrived. Therefore, it has been neither installed, nor tested, nor have technicians nor shop owners been trained.

As an interesting side note, one of the state's requirements for participating shops is that they maintain either a dedicated phone line or a dedicated internet connection to run the equipment. One of our crack staff members inquired as to the meaning of “dedicated internet connection.” “Would, for example, a T1 connection suffice, or would we need Charter Communications to run another line into the shop to be in compliance?” While waiting for a reply, we assume that we can split the signal outside of the shop and be in compliance.

In response to these and other issues, the state has decided that the new program will not begin until October 1, 2007, but that the old program will still end on August 31. This means that if your plates expire in September, you will need a safety inspection to renew your plates. You will not need an emissions inspection for renewal, but you will have to promise to get one by December 1, 2007. If you renew your plates and fail to make good on your emissions inspection promise, you may get in trouble. In 2000, there was a several month gap between the expiration of the prior safety & emissions program and the start of the IM-240 program, and motorists were allowed to renew their plates without current emissions inspections, and they were told that the inspections would be required by a later date or that vehicles would not be considered to be properly registered. We know of no cases of this actually happening.