

SANT AUTOMOTIVE NEWS VOL X, NO.1 **SPECIAL GROUND HOG’S DAY EDITION** *“COMBINING AUTOMOTIVE NEWS AND HOLIDAY CHEER SINCE 1992.”*

The editorial staff of the Sant Automotive News trusts that this special Ground Hog’s Day edition finds you in a state of blissful inner peace and tranquility which will extend well beyond the receipt of holiday bills and well in to 2008. For us, Ground Hog’s Day is a time of reevaluation. Specifically, it is a time to reevaluate any foolish New Year’s resolutions that we have made. Sure, it would be great to get to the gym more often, lose weight, or quit a bad habit or two but to what end? How bad was 2007 anyway? If anything, Ground Hog’s Day should be a time of self affirmation. Things are good and only getting better.

Emission Inspections Running Smoothly

Despite a month delay at the onset and a host of technical issues with equipment including improperly formatted printers, scanners that would not recognize the thumb prints of inspector mechanics, and digital cameras that would not properly upload the three required photographs of each vehicle presented for inspection, the Gateway Vehicle Inspection Program (GVIP) seems to be running well. Delays due to equipment malfunction seem to decrease every day, and customer satisfaction is high. The fees remain unchanged, and motorists are no longer required to make two stops to receive their required inspections. “Things are actually running a whole lot smoother than anticipated,” said Missouri Department of Natural Resources Spokesman Sly Veasselschmidt, “...Shop owners, technicians, and even motorists seem pretty happy right now, but once we start activating the required web cameras so that we can snoop around shops without even bothering to go there,...well let’s just say that a lot of people will be whistling a different tune. Also, we’re thinking about requiring some sort of remote monitoring device in people’s cars.” And so it goes.

Winter Safety

Often, we offer tips designed to prepare motorists for winter travel which include items like making sure that you have spare blankets in the trunk, highway flares, etc. Upon further review, our crack editorial staff has come to the realization that the vast majority of our customers do not engage in any trans-Siberian expeditions. That said, here are a few tips for driving safely around town during the winter. Make sure that you have a clear view of the road. Clear frost, ice, and snow from your windshield before you pull out of the driveway. Consider buying a scraper; it will increase your field of vision and extend the life of your wiper blades. If you choose to ignore the first tip, consider changing your blades mid-winter. The Seemore Safety Campaign, now in its third year, suggests that drivers change their wiper blades on Ground Hog’s day. So enjoy that steaming hot bowl of marmot stew, and get out there and change your blades. Check all lights and inspect tires for damage, unusual wear and proper inflation. Finally, consider an emergency kit just in case.

Teen Driver Safety

Those of us with teen drivers spend a disproportionate amount of time worrying about the safety of our kids. Here are a couple of tips that will hopefully help prevent an accident or two. Aside from inexperience and poor judgment, one of the leading causes of teen accidents is driver distraction. Here are a few simple tips that may just save your insurance deductible. Insist that your kids not use their cell phones while driving. While this tip has no chance of success, it is a good starting point. A good fallback position is to get you kids to agree not to make outgoing calls when driving. When their phones ring, tell them that they may answer their phones but will have to call back once stopped. Convince your kids not to be overly concerned with either driving instructions or directions given by their friends.

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Specifically, when one of their idiot buddies starts yelling, "Turn Now! Turn Now!," the one thing that they should probably not do is "Turn Now." Reacting instinctively to moronic instructions is one of the best ways to smash into oncoming traffic or a subdivision entrance. Rather, tell them that it is OK to wait a little longer for their left turn and that it is also OK to miss a turn and double back. Make sure that inexperienced drivers think about their route before they start their trip. Have them visualize where they are going and what the turns that they will need to make. Confusion related to tricky intersections and merging traffic lanes can be dangerous. Finally, make them aware of proper following distances. This is especially important during the winter when rain, ice, and snow can drastically increase stopping distances.

February Price Increases Announced

Despite fears of economic downturn, several suppliers have announced that they will increase prices next month. Not surprisingly, the main items affected are those that are derived from petroleum. Look for prices of tires, belts, hoses, motor oil, transmission fluid and other lubricants to rise from 3% to 5% next month.

Actual News Section

No news is good news. Please read on.

Highway 40 Project on Schedule

January 2 has come and gone, Highway 40 is closed from Brentwood to Spoede, and the bridges crossing the highway at Brentwood, McKnight, and Lindbergh have been demolished. Traffic of biblical proportions was predicted, and it was widely expected that women and minorities would suffer most. All in all, things have gone pretty smoothly, and many of us don't even miss the highway. Some have gone so far as to suggest that the project be abandoned and that a linear roller rink replace the closed section. This may be short sighted. Anyway, the good news is that in a few short years, Highway 40 will again be up and running, and it will even have an extra lane or two in a few places. Way to go MODOT.

Check Engine Light On?

Contrary to popular advertising, if your vehicle's "Check Engine Light" on, you have a problem. The problem could currently be minor, or it could be major, but it is a problem. Vehicles built during or after the 1996 model year are required to be OBDII compliant. Amongst other things, this means that if your vehicle exceeds federal emissions standards by more than 150%, the "check engine light will illuminate." High emissions mean that unburned fuel is being emitted from your tail pipe. Your fuel economy is suffering, and your vehicle is polluting. Also, it means that the life expectancy of your catalytic converter is being drastically reduced, and you will not be able to pass the emissions test. Save time and money, fix your car today.

2007 Sant Automotive Buckmaster

2007 was a lean year for the hunters of Sant Automotive, but the deed of gift for the Sant Automotive Traveling Buckmaster Cup (a tasteful little deal roughly the size of the Stanley Cup) requires that it be awarded annually. In any event, 2007 Golden Tool Winner Greg Damon again came up short. True, Greg didn't actually deer hunt, but the fact that he drives through Chesterfield and St. Charles on a daily basis made him at least an even money pick to bag the big one. Greg has a keen eye, and the ol' Chevy truck really gets after it when Greg hits the gas. Mike Ford, 2005 SA Buckmaster took an early lead bagging two deer. They were roughly the size of cocker spaniels, but competition hasn't exactly been fierce in recent years. Just when Mike thought that he'd again drink from the coveted goblet, I, your humble scribe, took the field and slew two mighty beasts with a bow and arrow. (Or is it bow and arrows?) Anyway, despite the fact that mine were no larger than Mikes' the fact that

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he got one with a gun and one with his bow caused the judges to award the prize to me. Gifts are unnecessary; congratulatory telegrams will be graciously accepted.