

FLEET Administration NEWS

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**2002-2003
NCSFA President**
Jim Ramsey – Oklahoma

Letter From the President

It's the Economy – S —

This is not a great year for state budgets - in fact, it is one of the worst in recent memory. The economic downturn since 2000 has affected state revenue collection and that, in turn has impacted every state agency and brought every government service under intense scrutiny. In most states, this economy has had a direct impact on fleet management by freezing new hires, limiting or eliminating some equipment buys, increasing life cycles of existing equipment and eliminating some services. And let's not even discuss pay raises. Moreover, it is becoming increasingly clear that this era of tight scrutiny is not going to be a short-term phenomenon. At both the national and at the state level, leaders are making it clear that their perceived mandate is to continue to reduce the size and cost of government.

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Clean Cities

NCSFA President, Jim Ramsey, FleetManager for Oklahoma State University and Joe O'Neill, Executive Director of NCSFA attended the Clean Cities Conference in Palm Springs in May to both gather information for the state members relative to updates in technology and leadership in the area of alternative fuels and "green shops" and to inform the attendees and exhibitors about the National Conference of State Fleet Administrators. Past NCSFA President, Sherry Lewis, joined Jim and Joe for a day of lectures and exhibits during the conference.

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Joe O'Neill and Jim Ramsey are hard at work at the Clean Cities Conference in Palm Springs. Marilyn Monroe (Susan Griffiths) lent moral support to the gathering.

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ATTENTION:

Please note the address of the NCSFA website has changed. The state of Utah has taken over the duties of Webmaster for the NCSFA, and the new web address is <http://ncsfa.state.ut.us>. Please make a note of the change.

Announcement!!

Mark your calendars and get ready to climb a real mountain!

**National Conference of State Fleet Administrators
Annual Conference and Trade Show
October 8-11, 2003
Keystone Resort and Conference Center
Keystone, Colorado**

There are several possible approaches that state fleet managers can take to address these issues. Hand wringing, although a first reaction employed by most of us at one time or another, has limited value in the long run. So, after the hand wringing is done, what are you specifically going to do? In our last issue, I addressed several actions that fleet administrators might consider in the short run to reduce the immediate impact of budget reductions. For the long-term, a strategy is needed, and it needs to be developed uniquely for each state fleet based on the peculiarities of that fleet in that environment. Moreover, as the fleet administrator, guess who's job it is to develop this strategy, get it accepted, and then turn it into a shared vision?

Our conference this year, in Keystone, Colorado has been put together to address this specific view of the future. The entire curriculum is built to give the state fleet administrators the tools he or she can use to build a smart and successful long range future for their state, their customers and their employees.

First of all, just to get your mind right, we will lead off with a discussion of the politicizing of fleet management in an era of constrained budgets. In this session, Paul Lauria, who has seen more different state fleets than practically anyone in the country, will examine the real-world pressures on, and perspectives of, elected officials, political appointees, and professional fleet managers as they each try to meet the sometimes conflicting demands of balancing the budget and operating a safe and efficient fleet. This session will lay the foundation for the days to follow.

Next, we will examine some specific areas, such as fuel cost management, the largest single expenditure in your fleet budget, and discuss immediate actions to minimize your bottom line cost of fuel, from purchase to storage to dispensing to tax recovery. In the same vein, replacement methodology is going to make or eat your future. Maximus will provide real-world solutions and applications, not pie-in-the-sky mathematical theories that don't work in the marketplace. The showcase of the week will be an entire interactive morning led by Randy Owen and Paul Lauria that will give the attendees take-home guidelines for states and universities to follow in securing the managerial autonomy and political and financial support they need to serve their customers in today's challenging fiscal climate. Paul and Randy will lead participants through a review of key facets of fleet management and discuss strategies that have proven themselves in the country's best-run fleets. A case study approach will be employed to help illustrate how participants can apply these proven methods in their own organizations.

Even further outside the box will be a session on technology. Hear what your fellow fleet managers are doing with e-bay auctions, cell phone use and technology, electronic bidding, automated fuel accounting and other bottom-line drivers.

To add to the dose of reality, there will also be a program on future technologies and Linda Bluestein will return this year to give attendees the latest requirements, changes and proposals in alternative fuel direction from the Federal government and to answer questions and address concerns about federal mandates.

Many conferences cost money to attend and then, after about three weeks of trying to catch up with your in-basket, it is hard to remember what anyone at the conference said. This conference will cost something to attend also, but it should return your investment tenfold. This is a unique opportunity to hear from the best minds in the business and take something home that will not only make you look good, but will be of real and significant economic value to your organization and your state – you literally can't afford not to come – see you in October in Colorado!



The Crown Vic Saga Continues

Ford just can't catch a break on its popular police vehicles - popular at least with the police departments that use them. But attorneys general all over the country are less than pleased both with the vehicles and with the explanations and the fixes that Ford has provided thus far in the continuing saga of the exploding gas tanks. Many other vehicles might also have a problem if somewhat routinely they were struck from behind at speeds between 75 and 90 miles an hour, especially if the truck was full of gear including flares. However, at least three new hot spots have developed in the on-going battle to find a better way to protect the lives of the police officers involved in these types of crashes.

Attorneys in Illinois filed a lawsuit against the Ford Motor Company over what they claim is a design flaw in the Crown Victoria fuel tank. The lawyers want to force Ford to produce more documents in what they hope will be an Illinois class-action lawsuit against the auto company. Of course, the fact that class-action suits are where the real money is in litigating these types of problems probably does not enter into the equation.

Dallas, Texas suspended all future purchases of the Crown Victoria because of safety concerns and has urged other cities to do the same. The Dallas City Attorney announced that the city would conduct its own crash tests to determine the safety of the police cruisers.

Ford conducted extensive testing under public scrutiny and continues to maintain the vehicle exceeds all federal fuel system safety standards. Perhaps it is not the Crown Vic but the federal fuel system safety standards which need to come under additional review. However, in September 2002 Ford began retrofitting the vehicles with a repair kits that include plastic shields placed around the fuel tank to reduce the chance of puncture when struck from behind. Unfortunately, the most recent fatality in Missouri involved a vehicle that had the kit installed.



Drive and Sort of Drink in Montana

In Montana, the deal is that you can have an open container of an alcoholic beverage, apparently between your legs or anywhere else in vehicle as you drive in Montana and you are not breaking the law. In early June, the Montana House of Representatives killed a Senate-passed bill that would have banned open containers of alcoholic beverages- such as a can of beer- in vehicles. Apparently that old concept of the majority ruling took a hit in the process, because a public opinion poll asked Montana voters whether they support or oppose banning open containers of alcoholic beverages in vehicles. Sixty-six percent indicated support for the ban, and 30 percent oppose it with 4 percent not sure whether they wanted to drink (sort of) and drive or not. In fairness to Montana, the 2003 Legislature did pass other legislation that toughened other portions of Montana's laws on driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Ford, Honda and Daimler Chrysler begin to Deploy Fuel Cell Vehicles

Ford Motor Co. will place its first fuel cell-powered cars into commercial operation early next year. Five hydrogen-powered Focuses will be used by fleet operators in and around Vancouver, British Columbia, for up to three years, the company says. Fleet users haven't been chosen for the project, which a Ford spokesman says will cost about \$3.5 million. Ford and its partners in the effort say the goals are to test the evolving technology, educate the public about fuel cells and find out how drivers and fleet operators react to fuel cell power and hydrogen refueling. Other organizers are Natural Resources Canada, a government agency, and Fuel Cells Canada, an industry association. Vancouver is home to Ballard Power Systems Inc., which produces Ford's fuel cell stacks. Ford owns 19.1 percent of Ballard. Ford joins a growing list of companies that are subjecting limited numbers of fuel cell-powered vehicles to real-world operating conditions in North America. While the programs are small, they could be crucial steps toward determining whether hydrogen fuel cells are the automotive power plants of the

not-too-distant future, as many in the industry hope.

Honda has a program where they are putting 40 fuel cell vehicles in the City of Los Angeles. They will be used by the City to evaluate the similar criteria that Ford is using in Canada. The headquarters of Honda's alternative fuel effort is home based in Los Angeles.

The first Mercedes-Benz Citaro city bus with fuel cell drive was handed over by Daimler Chrysler to the Lord Mayor of Madrid at this year's UITP World Congress in Madrid. It is the first of three buses with this zero-emission technology to be operated by the local public transport authorities of Madrid in demanding daily line service. Daimler Chrysler plans to have this type of bus in ten cities in the coming months.

Fuel cells combine hydrogen from a fuel source with oxygen from the air to produce electricity, with only water vapor as a byproduct. So, if hydrogen can be obtained without creating pollution, fuel cells largely would take motor vehicles out of the environmental equation, industry executives and engineers say.



Honda Factoid

The Honda Civic GX was recognized by the EPA as the "Cleanest Car on Earth" with an internal-combustion engine. It runs only on natural gas. Many other alternative-fuel vehicles are "flex-" or "dual-" fuel vehicles capable of running on gasoline and either natural gas or ethanol. But dual-fuel cars operate primarily on gasoline, so they don't achieve the full potential for reducing dependency on imported oil. With the Honda Civic GX, every mile is run on alternative fuel and is virtually pollution-free.

The Honda Civic GX natural-gas vehicle is up to 98.5% cleaner for smog-producing hydrocarbons than federal emission standards. Driven from California to Washington, D.C., the Honda Civic GX natural-gas vehicle would emit fewer reactive hydrocarbons than what would be released by spilling a single teaspoon of gasoline.

Used Vehicles Bringing Less

If your fleet depends on the sale of your older vehicles to provide part of your annual operating revenue, then the current market is not friendly water in which to be swimming. For the past several months, used vehicle prices have been on a steady decline and a model and aged vehicle that might have brought \$10,000 last year at this time may only net about \$9,000 for a similar model and age of vehicle. Price data from both major wholesale auction companies, ADESA Corp. of Indianapolis and Manheim Auctions Inc. of Atlanta, show that May wholesale prices were about 10 percent below May 2002 prices.

Used-vehicle inventory was at an 81-day supply, nearly twice as high as the 42-day ideal and well above the 68-day supply of May 2002.

Hefty new-vehicle incentives are the main culprit. Tom Webb, chief economist and author of the Manheim Used Vehicle Value Index, says his used-vehicle index stood at 102.5 in May, compared with the year-ago index of 114.2.

The index is based on the transaction prices of the vehicles Manheim sells for clients at its 85 U.S. auctions. The index considers factors such as mileage, market segment and model mix. Manheim started at a base of 100 in January 1995. It reached a high of 117.4 in February 2001.

Tom Kontos, vice president of industry relations and analytical services at ADESA, says his data reveals that the average used-vehicle price in May was \$9,057, down from \$10,018 in May 2002. But fleet managers should remember that May 2002 was part of the particularly strong and early spring market seen last year.

The good news is that, although year-ago wholesale prices were down sharply, May 2003 prices were flat on a month-to-month basis, so although you may have to revise your budgets based on the yet one more new reality, at least for right now, it is not getting any worse.



INVOICES ARE DUE!

By the time you get your newsletter, you should also either already have received or you are about to receive your invoice for your membership dues. This is just a reminder to take care of this chore as soon as you can so we can continue to work on issues to support your fleet needs.

Conference Program

Tuesday – October 7, 2003

5:30 – 7:30 P.M.

7:30 – 11:30 P.M.

Wednesday – October 8, 2003

8:00 – 9:00 A.M.

9:15 – 11:15 A.M.

8:30 – 11:30 A.M.

11:30 – 12:15 P.M.

12:30 – 6:00 P.M.

6:00 – 7:30 P.M.

6:30 P.M.

8:30 P.M.

Thursday – October 9, 2003

8:00 – 10:30 A.M.

10:30 – Noon

10:30 – Noon

12:15 – 1:45 P.M.

2:00 – 3:15 P.M.

3:30 – 5:15 P.M.

Friday – October 10, 2003

7:30 – 8:00 A.M.

8:00 – Noon

12:15 – 1:30 P.M.

Saturday – October 11, 2003

8:00 – 8:30 A.M.

8:30 – 10:00 A.M.

10:15 – 12:00 P.M.

12:00 – 1:15 P.M.

1:30 – 3:00 P.M.

3:00 – 5:00 P.M.

6:00 – 9:00 P.M.

9:00 P.M.

Conference Registration and Support Desk Open

Hospitality Suite – Sponsored by Wright Express

Breakfast (Continental) – Sponsored by US Bank Voyager Fleet Systems

The Politicizing of Fleet Management in an Era of Constrained Budgets –
Facilitator - Paul Lauria, Mercury Associates, Inc.

Trade Show Set Up (*Exhibitors only*)

State Welcome, Opening Ceremony and Honor Guard

Trade Show and Lunch

Buffet Dinner

Affiliates Recognition and Awards Ceremony

Hospitality Suite Sponsored by Wright Express

Trade Show and Continental Breakfast

Trade Show Break Down (*Exhibitors only*)

Fuel Cost Management – *Moderators - Alison Lantz -Idaho Transportation Department and Thomas Gustin - NCSFA Executive Committee, Member-at-Large - Montana.*

Keynote Luncheon: *Sponsored by American Honda Motors*

Replacement Methodology – *Speaker - Leslie Rucker - Maximus*

Report on Hybrids, Fuel Cells and Diesel Technology – *Speakers from Honda, Ford, Ballard Industries and Cummins will round out this panel.*

Continental Breakfast

Best Practices in State Fleet Management in a Tight Budget Climate—
Facilitators - Paul Lauria and Randy Owen, Mercury Associates, Inc

Annual Business Luncheon and Election – *Presiding Officer - Jim Ramsey - NCSFA President - Oklahoma*

Continental Breakfast

Federal Update and State Problems and Solutions – *Speaker Linda Bluestein - Moderator - Jim Ramsey - NCSFA President - Oklahoma*

Savings Through Technology — *Moderator - Donnell Rehagen - NCSFA President-Elect - Missouri*

Lunch.

Roundtable – *Moderator - Mike Merget -NCSFA Executive Committee, Member at Large - Georgia*

Executive Committee Meeting (*2004 Committee members only*)

Annual Banquet and Entertainment – (*Dress: Business Formal*)

Hospitality Suite and Annual T-shirt Swap – Sponsored by American Honda Motors

Survey Says...Foreign Cars in State Fleets

Bill Fuqua, who replaced Steve Dwyer in Oklahoma, asked the membership for a quick survey concerning the use of passenger vehicles either manufactured in another country or bearing the brand name of a foreign manufacturer, even though the vehicle itself may be constructed in the USA. (i.e. Honda Accords or Toyota Camrys). Specifically, he needed to know if the states had any passenger vehicles bearing the brand name of a foreign manufacturer in their fleets including those vehicles manufactured/assembled in the U.S. and what percentage of the fleet was composed of foreign manufactured vehicles. He asked for a breakdown by manufacturer. Also, whether or not any of the vehicles were assembled in the fleet manager's state.

The results were interesting for several points of view. First, of the states responding, thirty percent indicated that they owned no vehicles of foreign manufacture or foreign branding. One state indicated that they had purchased several Toyota Prius vehicles, but had taken so much heat from their legislature it was doubtful if they would attempt to do so again. Another state with a strong UAW presence told of purchasing Isuzu trucks and received legislative pressure to such a degree that they asked General Motors put the GM logo on the trucks, since they came down the same assembly line anyway. Apparently, that solved the problem of "foreign" trucks.

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In the states having foreign branded vehicles, 88 percent had Toyotas and 55 percent had Hondas. This was primarily due to Toyota being first to market with a four-passenger hybrid although there was a smattering of Camrys and Land Cruisers, Tacomas and RAV4s. Honda's big representative was the Civic GX and the Civic Hybrid, although a few states reported having Insights and two reported having Accords in their state passenger fleet. Whether or not a vehicle was manufactured in the fleet manager's state seemed to have little or no impact on the decision to purchase - at least no trend was discernible.

The big international winner was Alaska with Honda, Toyota, Kia, Mazda, Nissan, Subaru and, would you believe, a Jaguar XJ6 in the state passenger inventory.

Foreign brands represented between .07 percent and ten percent of the state passenger fleet with the average being about four percent.

Direct Purchase of Vehicles and Purchasing Used or Program Vehicle

Barbara Bonansinga of the Illinois Department of Central Services asked the members if they had any experience or had ever explored purchasing vehicles directly from the manufacturers like GSA does. She also asked whether the members had purchased used or program cars and what was their success or experience with that approach.

All states responded that they were unable to purchase vehicles directly from the manufacturers, one pointed to a possible Taft-Hartley conflict and several indicated that they had tried such an approach and had been turned down by the manufacturers. In fact, one state pointed out that the one item excluded from the GSA practice of allowing other public entities to share in their contracts was for vehicles. Bill Malcolm in Georgia, however, pointed out an interesting loophole for drug enforcement (see below).

Several states had experimented with used vehicles over the years, either as a cost cutting experiment or a cost savings necessity. They reported a mix bag of results. Vermont said that they used to purchase used rental cars a few years back, but the price differential between used rentals and new discounted state contract vehicles got to be so little it was not worth it any longer. Missouri reported that had purchased some used police vehicles and were successful in getting them into the fleet and back out again before they cost a great deal in repair, however, they have discontinued the practice. No states specifically targeted program cars as a viable option because the lack of difference in price between new fleet cars and used program cars.

Several states had purchased vehicles from federal surplus sales, but usually just for specific applications and not as a matter of course.

Bill Malcolm from Georgia uncovered the following and it is provided here for your information and possible use.

Section 1122 of the Fiscal Year 1994 National Defense Authorization Act

Section 1122 of the Fiscal Year 1994 National Defense Authorization Act established the authority for state and local governments to purchase law enforcement equipment through federal procurement channels, provided that the equipment is used in the performance of counterdrug activities. The authority for the "1122 Program" resides with the Department of Defense. The U.S. Army, as the Executive Agent of the program, has formed a steering committee consisting of representatives from the General Services Administration (GSA), the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA), and the Department of Justice (DOJ). Under the provisions of the statute, GSA is responsible for the development of a catalog, which not only explains the 1122 Program, but also delineates those products, which may be procured under the program.

Each state participating in the 1122 Program designates a State Point Of Contact (SPOC) to administer the state's activities under the program, by validating the counterdrug mission of each procurement request, and ensuring the availability of funds. To date, forty-five (45) states have elected to participate in the 1122 Program. With the approval of the Executive Agent, GSA has approved ten (10) Federal Supply Schedules and the purchase of motor vehicles under the program. The State Points Of Contact (SPOCs) are responsible for receiving all orders from state and local law enforcement entities, and for determining that the items will be used for counterdrug activities. For items under Federal Supply Schedules, the SPOCs send all orders directly to the Schedule contractor, payment will also be made directly to the Schedule contractor. Orders for the purchase of vehicles must be forwarded by the SPOC through GSA. The 1122 Program is nonmandatory to both the SPOCs and the Schedule contractors, i.e. the contractors have the option as to whether to accept or reject an order from the SPOC.

GSA's point of contact for this program is Ms. Zoe-Ann Freitag. Her telephone number in Arlington, VA, is (703) 308-4660.

Honda/NCSFA Environmental Award

Every year, the NCSFA and the Honda Motor Company jointly sponsor an award recognizing outstanding achievement in the area of improving environmental quality through leadership in Fleet Management. This award can either be to an organization or an individual and can be for on-going as well as new initiatives. Many states have aggressive programs in-place or are experimenting with new methods to try to improve their environment. Either of these types of programs are eligible for recognition by Honda and NCSFA. Moreover, the Honda Motor Company is most anxious for states to understand that, although they are very interested in efforts to improve the environment and have sponsored this award to promote that goal, no use or non-use of Honda products is any part of the selection criteria. In fact, Honda has turned over the entire selection process to the Executive Committee of the NCSFA.

The award consists of a beautiful marble freestanding award and national publicity in fleet publications. The award can be presented at the NCSFA Conference or in a venue in the winning state, which ever is chosen by the winning nominee.

Please take the time to nominate your state or another deserving agency for the NCSFA/Honda Environmental Award for 2002. The criteria for the Award follows:

1. Nominations must be made by a member in good standing of NCSFA.
2. The award can be for either:
 - a. Organizations which have achieved an outstanding accomplishment in the field of Environmental Quality through Fleet Management, or
 - b. Organizations that have demonstrated outstanding continuing programs in Environmental Quality through Fleet Management, or
 - c. Individual accomplishment in the field of Environmental Quality by a Fleet Manager.
3. The nomination should be in writing, with the narrative justification not to exceed one page and be sufficient to allow the Executive Committee to make a discerning judgment between various nominations.
4. Nominations for the Year 2003 award must be received prior to September 10, 2003, so the selection can be announced at the Annual Conference in Keystone.
5. Presentations will be awarded at the Annual Conference when appropriate. If not appropriate, an executive Committee member in the area of the recipient will coordinate presentation in the recipient's area at an appropriate venue.

Please forward your nominations by letter or e-mail to the NCSFA office at P.O. Box 159, Litchfield Park, AZ 85340-0159 or ncsfa@qwest.net

Welcome New Members...

Please join in welcoming several new members to the National Conference of State Fleet Administrators. In the Departments of Transportation arena from Wisconsin and Wyoming are two new members of NCSFA.

Rick Moling, who had been a member during the 1990's, has rejoined the organization.

Rick's address is:

Rick Moling
Equipment Administration
Wisconsin Department of Transportation
4802 Sheboygan Avenue - Rm. 36B
P.O. Box 7950
Madison, WI 53707-7950
rick.moling@dot.state.wi.us
608-261-0373
Fax: 608-267-4533

Also new to the organization is Curt Helzer from the Wyoming Department of Transportation.

Curt's address is:

Curt Helzer
State Equipment Engineer
Wyoming Department of Transportation
5300 Bishop Blvd.
Cheyenne, WY 82009
curt.helzer@dot.state.wy.us
307-777-4061
307-777-4163

On the University side we have three recent members. Peggy Grater is from the Kansas State University Motor Pool.

Peggy's address is:

Peggy Grater
Administrative Specialist
Kansas State University Motor Pool
Dykstra Hall
Manhattan, KS 66506-0903
pgrater@ksu.edu
785-532-6397
Fax: 785-532-6395

Another addition to our University Roster is Mark Brunk, Fleet Manager at UC Irvine.

Marks's address is:

Mr. Mark Brunk
Fleet Manager
University of California, Irvine
19172 Jamboree Blvd.
Irvine, CA 92697-3050
mebrunk@uci.edu
949-824-6104

Rounding out the University list is Leigh Remz whom we met at the NAFA Conference in Philadelphia in May. Leigh has been a member for a few months and has participated in some surveys, but here to introduce him better is some info on Leigh.

Leigh's address is:

Leigh Remz
Manager, Business Services,
Motor Transportation Services
University of Maryland
College Park, MD 20742-6311
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301-405-5483
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NHTA Addresses Rollover

The National Highway Transportation Authority has set a year-end deadline for issuing new rules to prevent rollovers, protect occupants in rollovers with roof strengthening standards. SUVs are the main concern, but rules could apply to all vehicles. The agency is under pressure from safety crusaders as rollover deaths rise to more than 10K a year — SUVs account for about one-fifth of that total having increased from about 880 in 1991 to over 2,000 deaths in 2000. NHTSA is introducing a new automatic steering mechanism to check rollover likelihood in 2004 vehicles, starting this September. In addition the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration will start publishing rollover ratings for each new vehicle. Automakers urge NHTSA to account for use of electronic stability control systems in testing — though most don't carry latest versions of these systems.

With this system, rollover ratings could become as important as crash ratings in terms of marketing pluses and minuses. Safety advocates are urging and the NHTSA seems to agree that the rollover rating will be required to be posted on the window just as gas mileage is now posted on new light vehicles. However, all auto and truck builders remain concerned about how to address tipping caused by drivers engaged in sharp steering maneuvers without installing costly stability systems. One approach being discussed is stronger roofs such as the one used in the new Volvo XC90 SUV to prevent occupant head injuries in rollovers, which manufacturers admit could happen even with the fancy stability systems. All sides admit it is impossible to build an idiot-proof vehicle, which unfortunately means that doctors and lawyers will have their income protected as the industry struggles with this growing problem.

By all measures, the Conference was a very large success. More than 800 people attended this year's Clean Cities get together, and more than 100 exhibitors were on hand to demonstrate their products and services in support of the environment. Also, some celebrities were on hand to lend their support to the environmental effort. Suzanne Sommers made a guest appearance to support the program as well as Dennis Weaver, who drove to the meeting in his Toyota Prius. Thomas Jefferson visited for about an hour and discussed the environment in terms of Jeffersonian versus Hamiltonian approaches to public and private financing and support of the environmental effort. Marilyn Monroe showed up to sing happy Birthday to the Mayor of Palm Springs, Will Kleindienst.

Although among the attendees there was a good deal of enthusiasm and support for alternative fuel initiatives, expert panels discussed the issues in more somber terms. Most agreed that, given the war in the Middle East, the condition of the current and state and federal budgets and the general reluctance of the Bush administration to move too far from a petroleum based economy, real progress in attaining the goal

of a hydrogen based economy by 2016 may be way too optimistic. If President Bush hopes that a child born in 2000 would be driving a hydrogen powered automobile when he or she gets their driver's license, he better hope the kid is a slow learner and his daddy works for Experimental Cars R US.

Based on what we learned at the conference, the consensus is that, although we can and must continue efforts in support of the alternative fuel initiatives, real progress will only be achieved through either major technological breakthrough or a vast external disaster that eliminates a great deal of the current supply of petroleum. We pray for the former rather than the latter. It was also pretty much the agreed that \$4.00 gasoline, pretty much like the rest of the world, might substitute for that vast external disaster, but that level of taxation in the current economic and political environment is so remote as to be immeasurable.

The Alternative Fuel and environmental efforts endorsed and advanced by Clean Cities will continue to make incremental progress across a wide range of initiatives, but major progress and assimilation are several years and a couple of technologies away.



NHTSA has announced that it will examine the driver's seats in 1998-2000 Ford Explorers: Federal safety officials have opened an investigation into the driver's seat in Ford Motor's 1998-2000 Explorer following reports that it can recline without warning, in some cases causing injury.

Colorado in October!

Early in October the aspen trees turn from green to a shimmering gold, and, interlaced between the green of the conifer trees and the rich hues of soaring stone, provide a spectacular view that has lured thousands of devoted mountain lovers to these high peaks for hundreds of years. This will be the setting for our NCSFA Annual Conference and Trade Show. In addition to a magnificent natural setting, this year's Conference in Colorado is going to have probably the best program we have ever fielded in terms of providing the attendees with tools that they can take home, plug in and save money or increase efficiency right now. As our President, Jim Ramsey, has pointed out, this is a really bad year for the states as they struggle to provide required services against a backdrop of last year's recession and this year's anemic recovery. Fleets, like every other part of state government are expected to share their portion of the hurt. But there are smart ways to sail a ship and make some headway in the strongest storm, but a new perspective - and a new attitude - is often needed to come at an old problem from a new direction. The agenda of this year's NCSFA is designed to give that distance, perspective, help adjust your attitude and send you home with information valuable enough to more than make your investment worthwhile. Randy Owens, Paul Lauria and Leslie Rucker have between them almost a century of experience in a huge variety of fleets and different political structures. Linda Bluestein and the folks from DOE bring the ungarbled word on what is happening - and what is likely to happen in terms of federal policy, guidelines and legislation. Our other speakers are also expert in their fields and will provide the information people need to move in a positive direction despite budget and political restraints.

The NCSFA is so confident that this program will return a multifold payback to the attendees, that we are contacting every Governor's office in the nation to invite them to send a representative to his event. We hope that the dialogue will develop that will push the edges of the envelope far enough to let new and innovative solutions emerge.

The venue is also very promising. Keystone Resort and Conference Center is about 6 miles south of Interstate 70 just past the Eisenhower tunnel. It was once a sprawling cattle ranch which has been turned into a community of condos, year round residents and one of the best ski areas in the west. Our activities not only include an excellent professional program, but also a fun week with friends old and new. One of the highlights of the week will be a rafting trip on the Colorado River followed by dinner served on the riverbank. Lest you have visions of the whole conference plunging over a cliff in a torrent of white water, the portion of the Colorado where we will take our trip is mostly flat with a small section or two of number 2 water (Number 1 water is perfectly flat - number 5 water is challenging - number 2 water is more of a large ripple than a rapids) but the high mountain scenery and the opportunity to experience this great river is well worth the experience. Conference attendees and their guests will be provided with warm waterproof gear to make the trip comfortable even if the weather is a little brisk. The guests will - as usual have a more entertaining time than the fleet administrators. They will explore a gold mine and experience a taste of the difficulties in the life of the hard rock miners in the nineteenth century. They will also lunch at the base of the world famous Breckenridge Ski Area and have time to shop in the both the boutiques of this resort town as well as the largest shopping outlet mall between Denver and Salt Lake City.

There is something for everyone in this program and we hope you will take the time to attend, share your expertise with your fellow fleet professionals. As Jim Ramsey said, "This is a conference you literally cannot afford to miss".



National Conference of State Fleet Administrators

The National Conference of State Fleet Administrators is the organization that brings together fleet administrators from agencies in each of the fifty states and territories. Together, the members cooperate toward the more effective exercise of fleet administration to attain greater efficiency and economy in state government. The conference offers regular membership to state administrators for \$480 per year. Additional staff from the same agency pay \$240 per year. Associate membership is extended to local and municipal government officials involved in fleet administration for \$240. Auxiliary membership is available to private sector companies for a fee of \$1,000. New government members may be eligible for discounted rates. For more information about the national Conference of State Fleet Administrators, please contact: NCSFA, P.O. Box 159, Litchfield Park, AZ 85340, 623-772-9096.

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