

Committee on aging convenes on campus

By J. Dana Haynes
Of The Print

The Oregon delegation to the President's Conference on

Aging met at the College last Friday.

College President John Hakanson, a member of the delegation, said the meeting was held "to form a loose plan

for keeping the delegation in contact with the legislature."

Hakanson was one of 2,000 representatives from around the country who at-

tended President Reagan's conference on aging, held last January.

The Oregon delegation currently stands as the sub-committee for Governor Vic Atiyeh's committee on Aging Services. Walt McGettigan, serves as chairperson of the Aging Services Committee; an appointment made by Gov. Atiyeh.

"With Mr. McGettigan here, we have a more direct access to the governor and the legislation," Hakanson said.

The sub-committee, which is chaired by Clayton Nyberg of Washington County, meets quarterly. The next meeting is scheduled for April 1, and will also be at the College.

"I have agreed on behalf of the College to accept all the written material that the sub-committee receives," Hakanson said. "We plan to create a library-type center in our senior center. This will help the sub-committee and also be good for the county and College."

Care for the aged has been of special interest to Dr. Hakanson and the College which is why the meeting was held on campus, according to Dr. Hakanson.

"Clackamas Community was the first college west of New Jersey to have an RSVP (Retired Senior Volunteer Program)," Hakanson said. The RSVP program was initiated in 1973, and is financed jointly by the federal government and the College.

Hakanson's own center interest is employment of the elderly. "The aged need to feel useful, to deal with other people, to get out of their homes, and to make some money. All these things can be accomplished by employing the aged," he said.

This is one facet of problems faced by the elderly that the sub-committee is looking into. Hakanson feels that, between the two, committee and the community colleges, Oregon's elderly are better represented than most.

"Oregon has one of the best community college systems in the country, in regards to responding to the needs of the community. That includes the elderly. I think the College has a more comprehensive grasp of their problems because it's something we've specialized in."



GIVING A PRESENTATION on aging, Suzan Hill, aging programs developer speaks before the current sub-committee of the Governor's Aging Services Committee. Aging Program Coordinator, Judy Smith listens. Staff photo by Duane Hiersche

About Life... By Laura Henkes

Watts evaluates pros and cons of diesel and gas

It took two months, but Ron Watts finally spotted an opening in his hectic schedule when he could share his expertise in an area important to all of us.

No wonder. As Chairperson of the Automotive Department, Watts is a dynamic leader; anxious to help his students and department in any way. This includes keeping on top of performance comparisons, the ever-changing auto components area, and major technological advances in the automotive industry in general.

Next to housing, automobiles will probably be the most expensive single purchase that most of us will make. In fact, new car prices now equal housing prices of 20-30 years ago.

Thus, Watts' opinion on diesel and gasoline engine comparisons may add some insight, considering the increasing availability of diesel engines in the consumer market.

The basic difference between the diesel and gasoline engine is simple: the gasoline uses spark ignition and the diesel utilizes compression.

Watts explained, "Diesel uses heat produced by compressing a large volume of atmosphere into a small area. Then, at the point where they want the ignition to take place...when that extremely small cavity is heated, raw diesel is blown into the area, and ignition takes place."

Gasoline doesn't require as much pressure (compression ratio). According to Watts, a typical diesel compression

compared to gasoline compression is 22/1 for diesel and 9/1 for gasoline.

"With gasoline you need that spark," he said. And that means equipment such as spark plugs, distributors, wires, and more.

Are there really advantages in driving a diesel compared to a gasoline engine?

Watts noted that although, the actual cost of diesel is low, the profit structure was already set up. This is why the consumer cost is high. He pointed out that in Mexico the difference in cost of gas and diesel is still very broad. Diesel costs 19 cents a gallon where gasoline sells for 55 cents a gallon.

Yet, Watts feels the real advantage in the diesel-propelled automobile today is the "miles that you drive to the gallons of fuel used. This is still a distinct advantage."

He estimated that a full-size car would get 26-28 miles per gallon using diesel. "Right now I am convinced that the only advantage in the diesel game is the miles per gallon," he said.

Watts noted that are a number of negative aspects to the diesel engines.

"We hear that tune-ups are less frequent because there are no plugs and points, but we finding out that on most of these diesel engines (Mercedes, Peugeot, Rabbit, Buick or Oldsmobile), there aren't too many that will be running 100,000 miles without major maintenance," he explained.

However, he quickly pointed out that Peterbilt trucks may go 300,000 to 500,000 miles, "but they are different."

Watts also stated that "overhauling costs are two to two and one-half times more for a diesel than a gasoline engine. And when you go to the showroom and look at new diesel vehicles," he added, "you will probably pay \$600-\$800 more just to be able to buy a vehicle with a diesel."

Many people affiliate diesel engines with a high pollution output. When DEQ checks for opacity the HC (hydrocarbon) and CO (carbon monoxide) count on the diesel come out extremely clean. However, Watts indicated that the NOx (nitrogen oxide) output (which is created by temperature and pressure) is higher on the diesel, which, he noted, is something the DEQ stations are unable to measure.

In comparing total probable costs between a compact gasoline and a mid- to full-size diesel automobile, Watts agreed that safety from the standpoint of car size should also be considered. It is not uncommon to hear of incidents in which compact cars involved in minor accidents can render the car "totaled" in the eyes of the insurance companies.

Watts commented that the "technology that has come out of the energy crisis has been positive, but that the spin off for the consumer has been nothing but expense."

For instance, the sheet metal used in cars from approximately 1976 is only half the thickness that it used to be, but is three times as strong. Watts attributes this to the effort to increase fuel consumption. However, after damage has been done, he explained, the metal is "so brittle that when you put a torch to it, it carbonizes and cracks," making it difficult to repair.

It looks as though the diesel availability will increase in future years. In spite of California's attempts to eliminate diesel sales there, the automotive manufacturers are looking at diesel as the answer to the CAFE (corporate

average fuel economy) requirement being imposed by the government.

Watts suggested that in the near future the government will want their entire product line to average 19 miles per gallon. To get their average up, they are saying "let's make diesels because they will boost our corporate average fuel economy index. Mercedes only offers a few that are gasoline now," he said.

Thus, it appears that as a result of the fuel economy movement, one of the more important factors in automobile decision making will be the choice between a diesel and gasoline engine.

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