The Hortland Phserver

Preventive Auto Maintenance A Must Before Vacations

(DM)—Thousands of automobile vacations could be ruined this summer due to mechanical breakdowns-breakdowns that are mostly preventable, according to officials with the non-profit National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence (ASE). The demands of summer's heat and stop-and-go traffic can cause weak or neglected components to fail, warns ASE.

To help avoid frustrating breakdowns, ASE offers the following

· Don't wait until the day before your vacation to begin a crashcourse in car maintenance. Routine maintenance should be a year-round

· Read your owner's manual; follow all recommended service intervals; keep good records.

· Inspect your vehicle periodically for unusual sounds, odors, changes in performance and handling, leaks, drips, etc. Be prepared to mention the symptoms to your auto techni-

· If you are not a do-it-yourselfer, find a repair facility with qualified technicians and reward good service with repeat business.

 Ask friends and business associates for recommendations. Check the reputation of the shop with your local consumer organization. Look along the wall of the customer waiting areas for evidence of the technicians' training and credentials. And look in the service bays for up to date equipment and an overall sense of orderli-

· Look for establishments with ASEcertified technicians. ASE technicians have taken national exams to prove their competency to their employers and to you. They wear blue and white ASE shoulder

insignia, while their employers display the blue and white ASE sign. Technicians have joined the ASE program from all segments of the automotive industry: car and truck dealerships, service stations, independent repair shops, volume retailers, franchised outlets, etc.

· A summer inspection should cover the following: all belts and hoses; all fluids; the radiator; the air conditioning system; engine performance (sluggish acceleration, rough idle, hard starts, etc.) Also check: brakes, tires (including spare), suspension and steering, lights and bulbs, the battery, and windshield wipers.

· Carry some tools (ask a technician for suggestions), plenty of windshield washer fluid, road flares, and

For a free brochure, "Getting Your Vehicle Ready for Summer," send a self-addressed, stamped, businesssized envelope to: ASE, Dept. DR#1, 13505 Dulles Technology Drive, Herndon, VA 22071.



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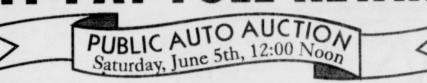
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