

Industry Trends

"10W-40" Slipping

Although "10W-40" and "10W-30" have been mainstays of motor oil purchases, these grades will command a smaller share of the market by the year 2000.

In fact, the major U.S. auto manufacturers are now recommending the use of "5W-30" motor oil for an increasing number of types of engines.

That means, in the near future, that more and more people will be turning to SAE 5W-30 oils for some or all of their vehicles.

Obviously, the more popular SAE 10W-40 and SAE 10W-30 oils will be around for quite some time. That's because millions of imports and domestically produced older cars will be on America's highways for many years to come. And there will continue to be a need for SAE 10W-40 and SAE 10W-30 oils.

But the motor oil trend is changing, especially in later model cars. And General Motors, for example, is now recommending the 5W-30 grade of motor oil for most of its engines.

GM offers some important reasons why SAE 5W-30 grade oils are now recommended for year-round use:

- Engines start better with SAE 5W-30 oils. This is particularly true with GM's four-cylinder and small V-6 engines. In cold-room tests conducted at -20 degrees F., 2.0 liter, four-cylinder engines (such as those used in Chevrolet Cavaliers) started almost every time with SAE 5W-30 oil.
- SAE 5W-30 oils provide faster lubrication of all engine parts in cold engines. This can be important for long-term durability, especially for the driver who frequently starts his car at low temperatures.
- Fuel economy is better with SAE 5W-30 than with either SAE 10W-30 or SAE 10W-40 oils. While the advantage isn't great in summer driving, it is significant in low temperature operation.

GM started recommending SAE 5W-30 oils for smaller engines in 1978 and, beginning in 1982, recommended SAE 5W-30 as the preferred viscosity grade for them.

However, SAE 10W-30 oils are still preferred for some of GM's engines, such as the 3.0 liter V-6 engine in the 1986 Buick Somerset. According to

GM, it is likely that SAE 5W-30 will be shown as the preferred motor oil for all GM passenger car and light truck engines within several years.

All car owners should look at the manual for their cars and follow the advice presented there. If it says "SAE 5W-30 preferred," optimum performance of their engines can be expected when using oils of this grade.

To keep ahead of this coming trend, it would be a wise move to refresh yourself with the vehicle registration in your area and determine the oil needs of your market.

Editor's Note: Special thanks to Dave Raisor, Mac's Products Manager, for supplying the above information on this upcoming change in the oil industry.

Chrysler Exec Sees Production Declines

Excess production capacity of cars and trucks in the American auto industry could climb to 7 million units by 1991. That's due to imports and accelerated production, in the United States, by foreign-based automakers. And, according to Chrysler Motors President Harold K. Sperlich, that figure (7 million) is substantially higher than most previous estimates.

Sperlich also said that:

- The domestic share of the American automaker could slump to 54% by 1991, compared to last year's share of 71%.
- Production capacity at "transplant" assembly plants (those operated in the United States by foreign-based automakers) could reach 2.6 million units by 1991 and reduce the business of existing suppliers by 27%.
- Car and truck over-capacity of new models in America could amount to 35% by 1991, compared to 1985's 13%.

Daytime Lamps in Sight?

Daytime visibility lamps, a mandatory item on most European vehicles, may soon be lighting up the United States as well. The lights resemble clear-lensed fog lamps in both mounting and design, and have been shown to reduce accidents (especially head-on collisions) by more than 25%.

Because of this large percentage re-

duction, American automakers are hard-pressed to support the growing effort for the lights' mandatory inclusion on domestic vehicles.

Older Car Population Triples

The population of cars 10.5 years old and older has virtually tripled, according to a report from the Automotive Information Council (AIC). From 1970 to 1984, said the AIC, cars in this age category increased by 275%. That, claims the Council, is a growth rate seven times greater than the total car population — in the same time period.

Since the older car population forms the market base for the automotive aftermarket, the above figure spells nothing but good news for NAPA AUTO PARTS stores and their traditional customers.

RV Industry Expanding

"The RV industry is on the verge of a major era of expansion," stated David J. Humphreys, president of the Recreation Vehicle Industry Association.

According to figures gathered by the University of Michigan, there are 25 million Americans who regularly travel by RV and, on the average, this group of motorists covers 5,900 miles per year and spends 23 days on the road. Humphreys said that these figures are impressive, but expects RV usage to grow even more in the near future.

RV growth will take off due to social and demographic trends, growing popularity of outdoor recreation and increased discretionary income (stemming from reduced taxes under the new tax reform law), said Humphreys.

Light Sensitive Glass for Autos

A light sensitive (photo-grey) glass has been developed for automotive applications.

Here's how it will work; a liquid crystal formula will instantly tint the glass when light strikes it. Not only will this photo-grey glass impede the sun's efforts to sneak through where the visor isn't, but the new glass will also be used in rear-view mirrors to protect drivers from those motorists who rudely flick on their high beams.