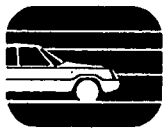
INDUSTRY TRENDS

IMPORT GROWTH CONTINUES

By the end of 1987, 32 million import cars and trucks were registered in the United States. That's the word from the Automotive Information Council (AIC), which went on to say the 32 million figure (when divided by the number of jobbers in this country) means each jobber has 1,200 import vehicles as possible sales sources.

The AIC is predicting that by 1990, the number of import car and light trucks will be 3.8 million and by 1995, the number will have reached 4.4 million.

The AIC also predicts, by 1990, the number of repairs and the amount of service on imports will have grown five times faster than that of domestic vehicles.



CHECK THE TIRES WITHOUT LEAVING THE CAR

An onboard tire pressure checking system will be available for 1989-model year automobiles. The system, available from Michelin, will provide a digital dashboard display of the pressure in all four tires, as well as the spare.

A warning light can be activated on the dash whenever a change in air pressure occurs. This is intended to make Drivers immediately aware and lessen the possibilities of flats and accidents.

It's a reduction in cost and size which has made the system available. The system consists of three subsystems: the pressure sensor in the wheel; the signal receiver/transmitter and custom chip near the sensor; and, the microprocessor and liquid crystal displays on the dashboard.

THE "RIGHT TO KNOW" STANDARD

Last October, the House passed the controversial High Risk Occupational Disease Notification and Prevention Act of 1987, which while giving millions of American workers new protection against occupational diseases may also add a margin of costs which could shut down many businesses. If your employees, or your customers' employees are exposed to products containing carcinogens or asbestos, for example, your store could be affected.

This legislation, going into effect May 20, 1988, will establish procedures requiring the government to notify employees that they may be at risk from hazardous substances in the workplace. The legislation also requires businesses to pay for the monitoring of the health of those employees and for the costs of relocating them to another area or continuing to pay their salaries if no other position is available.

If you have hazardous substances in your workplace, you are required to develop a written hazard communication program as well. In this program you must:

1. Put appropriate labels on containers of potentially hazardous substances;
2. Develop a Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) to provide information about the hazardous substances' properties;
3. Make the MSDS available to your workers;
4. Develop oral and written employee training programs on how to deal with these substances.

This legislation, which is known as the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) "right to know" standard, does not preempt the state and local laws already in states and territories which already have job safety and health programs approved by OSHA. Those states being: Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont, Virgin Islands, Virginia, Washington and Wyoming.

In those states not having OSHA approved programs, the "right to know" standard preempts state and local laws.

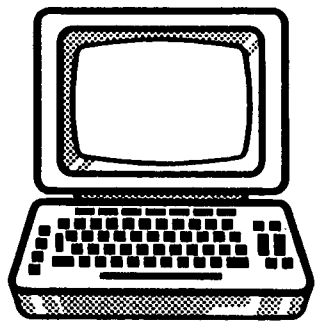


ASE TEST REGISTRATION

The spring 1988 ASE Certification Tests will be given in cities around the country in just a few weeks. That's important information for your traditional customers to know.

The ASE sign in a dealer's place of business or the ASE patch on his shoulder, is a demonstration of a mechanic's ability and a guarantee that the service he provides is as good as it can be. Urge your traditional customers to take the tests and to show that they are among the top repair technicians in the country.

While the ASE spring test will be given May 10, 12 and 17, your traditional customers must first register to take the tests and the deadline for doing that is April 3, 1988. Don't let your customers forget. April 3 for registration and May 10, 12 and 17 for testing.



COMPUTERS, COMPUTERS AND MORE COMPUTERS

Research recently released by the Motor & Equipment Manufacturers Association shows that the popularity of computers in jobbing stores is on the rise.

The report, which tracks jobber changes from 1980 to 1987, showed that 80% of jobbers with yearly sales over $1 million now have computers in their stores and 40% of jobbers with sales under $500,000 use them as well.

The number of computers being used has increased in both large and small population areas. Fifty-eight percent of jobbers in areas with under 15,000 people are utilizing them and 64% of those in areas with over 15,000 have computers in their stores.

The study also shows that in 1980 only 4% of store owners with sales under $250,000 had purchased computers. The most recent figure has risen to 17%.