April is National Car Care Month

by Rich White

April is National Car Care Month, the time of year to for you to focus on taking better care of your second largest investment. Especially now, with record high gas prices, you may not be able to control the price of gas at the pump, but you can take control of your vehicleâ€™s unnecessary fuel consumption.

Performing simple and inexpensive vehicle maintenance does not only save gas money, perhaps as much as $1,200 per year, but it also improves a vehicleâ€™s safety and dependability. In fact, according to the survey by the Automotive Aftermarket Industry Association, 75 percent of drivers said they are maintaining their vehicles better because of rising gas prices.

These simple gas-savings maintenance tips can add up to serious savings:

When tires arenâ€™t inflated properly, itâ€™s like driving with the parking brake on, and can cost a mile or two per gallon.

An air filter that is clogged with dirt, dust and bugs chokes off the air and creates a â€œrichâ€• mixture â€“ too much gas being burned for the amount of air, which wastes gas and causes the engine to lose power. Replacing a clogged air filter can improve gas mileage by as much as 10 percent, saving about 15 cents on a gallon.

A vehicle can have either four, six or eight spark plugs, which fire as many as three million times each 1,000 miles, resulting in a lot of heat, electrical and chemical erosion. A dirty spark plug causes misfiring, which wastes fuel. Spark plugs need to be replaced regularly.

Keep your car properly tuned. A 21st Century tune-up can improve your gas mileage by an average of four percent. Fixing a serious maintenance problem, such as a faulty oxygen sensor, can improve your mileage by as much as 40 percent.

Check your vehicle gas cap. About 17 percent of the vehicles on the roads have gas caps that are either damaged, loose or are missing altogether, causing 147 million gallons of gas to vaporize every year.

You can receive a free 56-page Car Care Guide designed to help motorists save money, conserve energy, improve highway safety and help protect the environment. To order your free guide, visit the Car Care Councilâ€™s Web site.

Sincerely,

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