

Gas Additives, Devices Make Fuelish Claims

by Bend Weekly News Sources

Motorists hoping to stretch their fuel dollars by boosting their vehicles' fuel efficiency should be wary of the promises of gas-saving additives, fuel-line devices and other supposed enhancers, AAA warns. With Idaho's current average price for regular grade gasoline just pennies short of the record price of \$2.95 set last September, some motorists may be persuaded to experiment with one or more of the many fuel additives or devices that promise to dramatically improve a vehicle's gas mileage.

"Through the years, AAA has evaluated many of the formulas currently sold in the marketplace and has yet to discover one that clearly provides significant fuel-saving advantages for motorists," said John Nielson, Director of AAA's Approved Auto Repair and Car Buying programs.

Fuel additives, which can be purchased on the Internet, at auto supply stores or through multi-level marketing organizations, must be tested and registered with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) before they can legally be sold in the United States.

But Nielsen said the EPA tests only prove additives will not harm the vehicle's fuel system or increase the amount of pollution the engine emits. The tests do not address a product's effect on gas mileage.

Among the more than 100 products tested by the EPA, none delivers a significant improvement in mileage and some may indeed damage a car's engine or cause increases in exhaust emissions.

"A recent call requesting our advice on a magic fuel-saving tablet is an excellent case in point on this whole issue," said AAA Idaho spokesman Dave Carlson. "It's easy to see that people looking for answers become easy targets for the next generation of marketers with new silver bullets."

AAA said driving efficiently and maintaining a vehicle in top condition are more likely to yield better gas mileage. "If drivers modify their habits and simply drive less aggressively, they will see an immediate improvement in their car's gas mileage," Nielsen said.

Other tips to improve fuel efficiency are to keep tires properly inflated, remove any unnecessary baggage and weight from the vehicle, carpool when possible, and use the household's most fuel-efficient vehicle as much as possible.

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