

Report: U.S. motorists driving less

by UPI

WASHINGTON - U.S. motorists have limited their driving habits for the first time in 26 years due in part to increasing fuel costs, USA Today reported.

The travel report released Friday was based on Federal Highway Administration data that showed motorists nationwide have been driving less during the last 18 months after nearly three decades of steady travel increases.

The data indicated between 1980 and 2005, the average annual growth rate of miles traveled by U.S. drivers was 2.7 percent.

But beginning in 2006, those numbers began leveling off and this February dropped 1.9 percent from the same point one year earlier.

Experts credit the rising cost of gasoline, demographic shifts and traffic congestion with prompting the travel decline.

USA Today said if the United States had maintained the travel growth it experienced in 2000-2005, the nation's drivers would be driving more than 200 million miles daily than they are now.

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