

U. S. Department of Transportation

news:



Office of Public and Consumer Affairs

Washington, D.C. 20590

REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BY SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION BROCK ADAMS, RSV CEREMONY, SEATTLE, WASHINGTON, MARCH 26, 1979.

I am delighted to be here today for this unveiling of the newest model in our Research Safety Vehicle program. This is an 'off-the-shelf' model. It could be manufactured -- mass produced -- almost totally from materials and components available today. At the same time it is unique, from tires to rooftop, and offers advantages not found in today's cars.

The vehicle being unveiled here today shows the American public the levels of performance, safety and fuel economy they can expect in future automobiles. It looks like a 1985 model, performs like one and exemplifies the kind of car we all should be driving in the mid and late '80's.

As you know, I have given considerable time and attention in recent months to the future of the automobile

We have motor vehicle standards -- for emissions, fuel economy and for certain safety equipment. But we have not had -- and do not have - an overall, cohesive national automobile policy. I think we must have one, and I am concerned -- we must all be concerned -- for three reasons:

1. Instability of oil prices and the uncertainty of supplies. Motor vehicles consume nearly half of all the oil we use in this country, and half of that comes from foreign sources. So to preserve the car, and to guarantee the personal mobility it provides, we must produce automobiles with high fuel efficiencies.

2. Traffic fatalities have again gone over the 50,000 mark. This increase coincides with a growing departure from the 55 mile per hour speed limit and an attempt by some Western states to overthrow the national speed limit. I think the correlation between speed and fatalities has been well established, and the speed limit should be observed to save lives as well as fuel. Beyond that, the greatest contribution we can make to safety is to build cars designed from the ground up to protect their occupants to the fullest extent possible.

3. In addition to meeting fuel economy and safety objectives, tomorrow's cars must also satisfy statutory emission standards, if we are to safeguard and continue to improve the quality of the air we breathe.

In other words, if we want to continue to enjoy our cars -- if we want to have our cake and eat it, too -- we have to clean up our act. The industry must build, and the people must buy cars that measure up to their social responsibilities. They also have to be well-styled, competitively-priced vehicles -- so that we have the complete package: an energy-stretching, life-saving, clean-running, people-pleasing car.

That's a tall order, but I have told the top auto industry officials that we really have no recourse. And I have pledged the government's help in the basic research work on the car of the future.

Our RSV program, begun several years ago, moves in that direction. We have focused on four and five-passenger models in the under-3000 pounds range, because that's where the challenges are the toughest and it's where the future is. Our objective is to demonstrate that small car buyers do not have to sacrifice safety or comfort to gain fuel economy and low emissions.

The car we are unveiling here today meets those tests. A prototype vehicle developed by Minicars, Inc., of Goleta, California, under a Department of Transportation contract, the car accommodates four adults in comfort, has room for the normal van luggage for a family of four, and is equipped with such popular conveniences as air conditioning and stereo radio.

More importantly, this car meets the following safety criteria:

1. Occupant protection

- Frontal protection in crashes up to 50 mph.
- Seventy-five percent reduction in the serious injuries and fatalities that now occur in side impact accidents.
- Greater pedestrian protection because no damage bumpers and exterior plastic surfaces lessen the impact in any accident.

2. Structure safety

- The car features a steel frame filled with inexpensive polyurethane foam to absorb crash forces.
- It has gull-wing doors with strong roof supports, and high strength rollbars.

3. The car is equipped with air bag systems up front and improved three-point belt systems in the rear.

The prototype is equipped with a Honda stratified-charge engine and five-speed transmission with an EPA rating of 32 mpg for the combined highway/city cycle. Exhaust emissions meet 1980 requirements.

This program, in other words, has achieved our basic goal -- to employ safety features in a car that gets good gas mileage, does not pollute and can be adapted to design and production line assembly. I believe every driver in the country benefits from this program. It puts in one vehicle the characteristics the auto industry can build into their products. Minicars will build 12 of these vehicles for test and evaluation. Following the unveiling here, this car will go on a 16-city Western tour before going on display in Washington during National Transportation Week. The vehicle will be included in the International RSV Conference in Paris in June.

Let me say again how pleased I am to have this latest addition to our RSV development program. It was built on the West Coast and I am delighted that it is being shown for the first time here in my home city. We are encouraged by the progress being made and we look for further developments as we work to develop cars we can live with in the years ahead.

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