

Ford minivans, Mustangs recalled for faulty panels

WASHINGTON (AP) — Ford Motor Co. is recalling about 770,000 Windstar minivans and Mustang sports cars after complaints the hoods were flying off some of the vehicles, the company said Thursday.

The government's highway safety agency received 45 complaints that the hoods' top panel detached from the lower panel, flying off or up against the windshield while the vehicle was moving, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

The lower panel remains over the engine, secured by the hood latch, the report said.

"Ford is addressing the issue and dealers will have parts shortly" to fix the vehicles, said Ford spokeswoman Karen Shaughnessy.

Being recalled are 1995-96 Windstars and 1994-96 Mustangs, said NHTSA spokesman Tim Hurd.

The report said motorists claimed there were two crashes and one injury from the flying hoods. The company has told the government the likely cause was damage in prior low-speed collisions.

The safety agency, in its monthly report on auto defects, also said it has upgraded an investigation into more than 200 complaints of windshield wiper failure in 1992-93 Chrysler minivans. More than 900,000 of those minivans are on the road.

Some motorists complained the entire wiper arm was stripped from its pivot in snow or rain and thrown from the minivan. "These failures occur without warning," the NHTSA report said.

No injuries were reported, but Chrysler told the government there were 15,050 warranty claims on the wiper systems. Chrysler redesigned the wiper pivots in May 1993.

In another matter, 46 consumers have complained the back of the front seat collapsed in some General Motors Corp. minivans from model years 1990-91.

Investigators are looking at the Chevrolet Lumina APV, Oldsmobile Silhouette and Pontiac Trans Sport minivans. There are nearly 190,000 of them on the road.

Canada recalled those vehicles in March. GM acknowledged that the bolt holding up the seat back could "fatigue and break off, leaving the seat back free to pivot rearward until stopped by the rear seat."

However, the company said the complaint rate about collapsed seats in the United States was much lower than in Canada.

The agency also opened some preliminary inquiries into inadvertent air bag deployments.

The agency has three other ongoing investigations into air bag deployments in Mazda, Subaru and Chevrolet cars.

Group seeks agnostic outlet

BY BRIAN CARLSON
Assignment Reporter

Acknowledging that one is an atheist or agnostic may not be easy in America's Bible Belt, but the Campus Atheists and Agnostics want students with doubts about religion to know they are not alone at UNL.

Informally organized in August, the group has begun meeting and recently was recognized by ASUN as an official student organization at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

"It's an outlet for students with these ideas to get together and talk in a comfortable atmosphere," said Dan Augustyn, CAA president. "There really has been no outlet for students with these types of beliefs."

The group was the brainchild of Augustyn, a junior philosophy, math, economics and political science major. He had pondered forming the group for about a year and a half, and in August he joined forces with Jason Nord, a sophomore English and philosophy major who wanted to form a free-thought society on campus.

Augustyn and Nord merged their groups to provide a forum for discussion of religious and philosophical problems and of the stigma associated with being an atheist or agnostic.

The group has about 65 to 70 people on its e-mailing list, and both students and professors have expressed interest in the group, Augustyn said.

Augustyn said the group encouraged "truth seekers" and those with questions or doubts about traditional religion to partic-

ipate.

"We're not trying to convert anyone," he said. "We're certainly open to hearing anyone."

Nord said atheists "get a bad rap," especially those who have grown up in Christian homes. By bringing its ideas into a public forum, he said, the group hopes to counter the social stigma that comes with straying from organized religion.

"The things we hold dearest are the things we should question most," he said. "Otherwise we just sit there, stagnant. The thing I always ask people is, 'What's so bad about thinking for yourself?'"

But the organization's arrival on the UNL scene has not been without controversy.

After the group posted signs around campus advertising a meeting, several were torn down or had other signs stapled over them.

On one occasion, CAA members watched as a group of students ripped down CAA signs three consecutive times in Westbrook Music Hall. When organization members appealed to a campus security officer, he told them "not to overstay our welcome," Augustyn said.

"This is a group that could make some people angry," Augustyn said. "My question is, why does it make you angry? We've taken bold steps to be peaceful."

Members said they enjoyed the chance to participate in lively discussion and debate — without being restricted by traditional religious beliefs.

"It gives people who are agnostic, or questioning religion in general, a place to go for other answers," said Jill Matlock, a

sophomore pre-education major.

Far from being irrelevant to their lives, members said, religious and ethical questions are of central concern in the quest for truth and meaning in life.

"Most of us grew up in Christian homes," said Mike McQuistan, a junior philosophy, math, economics and political science major. "It's been such an important issue for such a long time that we can't just disregard it."

Nick Wiltgen, a senior meteorology major, said that regardless of one's religious beliefs, it is important to understand religion's historical significance.

"Ideas shape actions, people and society," he said. "Anyone trying to effect any sort of change needs to analyze the ideas underlying those actions."

"Religion is perhaps one of the broadest and most all-encompassing" of such ideas, he said.

Any honest discussion of religion involves asking questions and acknowledging doubt, Augustyn said.

"Christians would do well to heed St. Augustine's warning: 'Faith without doubt is dead faith,'" he said.

Possible upcoming topics for CAA group discussion include evolution, separation of church and state, the role of the religious right in American politics, paranormal activities, the existence of God and the problem of evil.

The Campus/ Atheists and Agnostics have set up a Web page that can be accessed at <http://lane.unl.edu/CAA>. Students who wish to join CAA's e-mailing list can e-mail Augustyn at 00206925@bigred.unl.edu.

Ethanol car geared to win

ETHANOL from page 1

engine, therefore compressing ethanol more than gasoline would be compressed.

Then, you can harness more of the energy released, Hieronymus said.

Frank Pruitt, a graduate student on the team, said other changes to fuel lines and engine components must be made because ethanol is more corrosive than gasoline.

But the team's biggest challenge could lie in the car's catalytic converter, Hieronymus said. The converter changes poisonous carbon monoxide emitted by the engine into carbon dioxide.

It also determines how environmentally friendly the car's emissions will be, he said.

The contest will be heavily weighted on emissions, he said.

In the end, the team hopes to have an ethanol vehicle that runs more efficiently and cleaner than any now on the market. Team members said that, unlike other alternative fuels,

ethanol has significant potential for widespread use.

"They've been looking at alternative fuels for quite a while, but ethanol is a feasible fuel," Pruitt said. "Cars will run on it, and run well."

Pruitt said the experience configuring an engine to use alternative fuels is valuable experience for the students working on the car. Students are not paid for their work, but the experience will make them attractive to potential employers.

The team is advised by two mechanical engineering faculty advisors, William Weins, an associate professor, and Professor Alexander Peters.

But students develop their own ideas and make all changes to the ethanol car, Pruitt said.

Students who worked on a natural gas-powered pick-up truck in 1991 and 1992 were later hired by such companies as Caterpillar, Case Tractors, John Deere, General Motors and Ford Motor Co.

"Part of (the contest) is to pacify the politicians" who have an interest

in the state ethanol industry, he said, but the contest could lead to important advances in ethanol-burning engine design.

Pruitt said he has worked for more than a decade with alternative fuels, including natural gas and propane.

But ethanol is most attractive in the United States, because it is made domestically and could cut the country's dependence on foreign oil, he said.

Aaron Thompson, a senior on the team, said his job is to convey the importance of making ethanol vehicles to companies during the Ethanol Vehicle Challenge.

He hopes those companies will see the importance of UNL's efforts and donate money that could pay for future alternative fuel competitions.

Thompson said the Nebraska Corn Board, among other Nebraska agencies, already has donated funds to the project.

"Especially in Nebraska, it's real valuable to us," he said.

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GUANA'S
1428 O St.
COSTUME CONTEST
1st PRIZE - \$250 CASH
2nd PRIZE - \$75 BAR TAB
GROUP PRIZE - KEG PARTY
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DOORS OPEN AT 6:00

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Saturday November 1
Doors Open at 8 pm, Show Starts at 9 pm
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