

Automotive Answers

Giving Car Costs An Overhaul

(NAPSA)—For many consumers, the costs associated with owning and operating a car continue to rise. Fuel prices, insurance rates and car maintenance expenses have all gone up in recent years. Thankfully, you don't have to alter your driving habits or buy a new car to get some relief. Here are some quick, inexpensive, easy ways to save money:

- **Mind the air to save money on fuel**—The U.S. Energy Department reports that underinflated tires can increase fuel consumption by up to 3 percent. One study estimates that 50 to 80 percent of the tires rolling on U.S. roads are underinflated. Astonishingly, Americans could save up to two billion gallons of gas each year simply by properly inflating their tires.

Secondly, a clogged air filter can increase fuel consumption by as much as 10 percent. Air filters keep impurities from damaging the interior of the engine, so replacing dirty filters will save gas and protect your engine. More tips to save money on fuel are available at www.fueleconomy.gov.

- **Get slick to reduce maintenance costs**—There are high-performance motor oils that can make meaningful improvements to a car's fuel economy and engine life. For instance, numerous independent studies have found that Royal Purple motor oil can improve fuel economy by 5 percent or more. Find out more at their Web site, www.royalpurple.com.

Using a high-performance synthetic motor oil, as opposed to con-



There are a number of ways to reduce the costs associated with owning a car.

ventional oil, also allows for more miles between oil changes. This reduces maintenance costs and the amount of time spent on maintenance. You'll pay a little more for premium motor oil, but the savings in fuel and reduced maintenance costs more than make up for the higher price.

- **Reduce your insurance costs by doing your homework**—One of the simplest ways to reduce insurance costs is to shop around. Get at least three price quotes. You can call companies directly or access information on the Internet. The state insurance regulator may also provide price comparisons. Other ways to reduce insurance costs can be found by visiting the U.S. Insurance Information Institute's Web site at www.pueblo.gsa.gov/cic_text/cars/autoinsu/autoinsu.htm.

An astute consumer can save hundreds of dollars a year on automotive expenses without buying a new car or changing lifestyle. All it takes is a little time, research and the choice of better-performing products.