

Driving In *Style*

Navigation Device Lets Drivers Know As They Go

(NAPSA)—If you spent a lot of time stuck in traffic this year, you have lots of company. U.S. drivers spend an average of 47 hours a year stuck in traffic, and in very large urban areas, more than 60 hours a year.

A growing number of drivers are finding they can reduce some of that time and increase their comfort by using technology that helps them chart the best route to their destination—they're adding GPS navigation systems to their vehicles.

A GPS, or Global Positioning System, is a device that uses satellite technology to precisely pinpoint the location of a receiver. A GPS receiver can provide the driver with information such as location, recommended route to take to a destination, estimated time it will take to get there and points of interest along the way.

Some GPS devices provide the added benefit of playing music. Simply download the desired files onto the device's hard drive or removable storage card and users can have their music library wherever they go.

If you are thinking of getting such a system, here are a few questions to consider:

- Is the unit designed for city or off-road driving, or is it for hiking trails?
- Is a portable or installed unit better for me?
- Is the screen display easy to read?
- Can it provide information on current traffic conditions?

One of the newest navigation systems for cars is a high-performance, portable device called Blackbird (\$499.95) from Alpine



Go WITH THE FLOW—A portable navigation device has been developed that gives traffic flow information on your route.

Electronics. In addition to an easy-to-read touch screen, it has a complete database of U.S. and Canadian maps and more than 6 million points of interest.

The device has a built-in Radio Data System (RDS) traffic tuner that is capable of receiving continuously updated traffic information, including flow of traffic and incident information in 42 U.S. markets. This allows drivers to identify delays so they can choose to avoid traffic problems. The device also offers a detour option, which helps drivers avoid a congested area by offering an alternate route.

Alpine has manufactured in-dash navigation systems for more than 10 years, but Blackbird is the first portable device for the company. The company has won five J.D. Power awards for its fixed in-vehicle navigation systems, on which Blackbird is based. One of the advantages of the portable version is the flexibility to move the device from car to car. Plus, it can easily be given as a gift.

To learn more about the features of this navigation device, visit www.alpine-usa.com.