

Automotive Answers

Saving Money At The Pump—And Then Some Automotive Products That Do More Than Improve Fuel Efficiency

(NAPSA)—With gas prices reaching record levels, drivers are increasingly looking for ways to rev up their miles per gallon. While a great deal of attention has been given to how changes in driver behavior and habits can improve gas mileage, there are also a number of automotive products and accessories that can help vehicles get better fuel efficiency.

According to Peter MacGillivray, vice president of communications and events at the Specialty Equipment Market Association (SEMA), automotive specialty-equipment products often do “double duty,” serving to improve fuel efficiency as well as improve the style, comfort, safety or performance of a vehicle.

“Most automotive products and accessories serve more than one purpose,” said MacGillivray. “While it’s the desire to personalize and individualize one’s vehicle that is driving the industry, automotive specialty-equipment products make driving more fun, comfortable or safe—and in many cases—even more fuel efficient.”

MacGillivray says that with today’s high gas prices, now may be a great time for drivers who have been considering any of the following products to make their purchase:

Cold-air intakes: For years, performance-minded auto aficionados have installed cold-air intakes to increase the power of the internal-combustion engine. These products route cooler, denser air from outside the car, rather than the warm air under the hood, into the vehicle’s engine. Available in a variety of colors and sizes, cold air intakes usually range in price from \$100 to \$150 and are a relatively inexpensive way to increase performance and improve gas mileage.

Cat-back exhausts: The cat-back exhaust systems refers to the components of a vehicle from the



Tonneau covers give pickup truck owners added protection for their precious cargo, as well as improved gas mileage.

catalytic converter on back (or the outlet of the catalytic converter to the final vent to open air). This generally includes the pipe from the converter to the muffler, the muffler and the final length of pipe to the open air. Aftermarket cat-back systems generally use a larger-diameter pipe than stock ones, thus reducing back pressure and enhancing performance.

“Replacing a factory-installed cat-back exhaust system with an aftermarket system can improve the efficiency of how air enters and exits the engine, thereby improving the vehicle’s horsepower and use of fuel,” said MacGillivray.

Tonneau covers: Drivers of pickup trucks often opt to install covers on the beds of their vehicles as a way to protect precious cargo. Tonneau covers, which are the hard or soft covers that fit flat over the bed and are not raised above the bed (as caps or shells are), have been proven to help drivers improve fuel efficiency. A SEMA-sponsored study found that tonneau covers provided a reduction in the coefficient of drag anywhere from 4.2% to 7.8%. That translates to a more efficient pickup, which means increased miles per gallon.

In addition, other products drivers may want to consider to help

improve gas mileage include spark plugs, ignition units and headers. However, as with most aftermarket installations, seeking the advice and assistance of professional installers and restylers is recommended.

“These professionals have the expertise and knowledge required to install the products properly,” said MacGillivray. “And proper installation is a key factor to having the product perform effectively and efficiently.”

Information about specific automotive specialty-equipment products, as well as about professional installers and restylers, is available at www.enjoythedriver.com.

The website is presented by the Specialty Equipment Market Association (SEMA), a trade association representing manufacturers, distributors, retailers, installers, restylers and other professionals in the industry. SEMA is the authoritative source for research, data, trends and market growth information for the specialty auto parts industry. The industry provides appearance, performance, comfort, convenience, and technology products for passenger and recreational vehicles. For more information, call (909) 396-0289 or visit www.sema.org and www.enjoythedriver.com.