



CAR CARE CORNER

Your Vehicle: The “Spark” Of Your Eye

(NAPSA)—If you’re like many motorists, your vehicle has been with you long enough that you’ve given it a name. Cars have become extensions of our families. They even play a major role in fond family memories—that is, if they’ve been treated right.

Let’s face it, cars need to be cared for in order to stay healthy. Regular hydration with fluids, like antifreeze/coolant, and routine exercise like tune-ups are essential for maintaining optimal performance. Ignore or skip maintenance routines over a prolonged period, and you may be asking for trouble. So, why do so many drivers neglect their vehicles?

“According to the Automotive Aftermarket Supplier Association, more than \$62 billion worth of vehicle maintenance went unperformed in 2002,” said Sean Lyon, senior product manager for Autolite. “Ignore potential problems long enough and your vehicle, like any other member of your family, will start talking back to you. And in this case, actions speak louder than words.”

You won’t be able to ignore engine misfires or overheating for long. That’s why Lyon recommends quick under-the-hood inspections every six months. “Take a look at hoses, wires and belts. You don’t have to be a master mechanic to notice if something is out of place.”

Lyon says that one simple routine that helps maintain fuel efficiency and engine performance while minimizing exhaust emissions is spark plug maintenance. “Many people underestimate the importance of a spark plug, but it’s exposed to more severe stress than any other part of the engine.”

A spark plug delivers a high voltage spark within split-sec-



ond timing, thousands of times a minute under extremely varying, always hostile, operating conditions.

Lyon suggests having your spark plugs changed every 30,000 miles, or in accordance with your owner’s manual. Using premium, platinum-tipped plugs, such as Autolite® Double Platinum spark plugs is also a good idea. Trends show that an increasing number of do-it-yourselfers are turning to platinum plugs due to the metal’s performance and durability characteristics.

These specific plugs offer top fuel efficiency, virtually no gap erosion over their lifetime and are up to 30 percent more durable than the average of leading competitors’ plugs.

“Don’t let vehicle maintenance intimidate you! If you feel certain projects, like spark plug maintenance, are out of your league, take your vehicle to an ASE-certified mechanic,” suggests Lyon.

To learn more about spark plug technology, visit www.autolite.com. Autolite is a leading provider of spark plugs and ignition wire sets for both the Original Equipment and aftermarket. The brand has produced more than 9 billion plugs in its lifetime.