

polled considered as "very important" the "degree to which the car protects people from injury," trailing only cost and mileage ratings as the prime concerns of car shoppers.

Ranked just below the crash protection issue in importance, according to those interviewed in the survey, was the matter of "how costly it would be to repair the car after an accident." That question was considered very important by 51 percent of the survey participants.

Auto makers should provide the "leadership to see that cars are built to be as safe as possible," a majority (57 percent) said. When asked who they would look to for such leadership, others said: federal government, 30 percent; consumer groups, 24 percent; insurance companies, 10 percent; and state government, 6 percent.

Of those polled, 51 percent thought about the right safety features are now provided on new cars, and 39 percent believed more safety features are needed. Only 4 percent thought there should be fewer safety features, and 6 percent were uncertain.

Copies of the "Public Attitude Monitor 1981" are available from the All-Industry Research Advisory Council, 7315 Wisconsin Ave., Suite 231-W, Bethesda, MD. 20814.

## NHTSA Contract Produces Promotion Group

A new group created out of a study prepared for the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) is soliciting donations in the \$25,000 to \$200,000 range from automotive and other major corporations.

According to documents describing the newly formed Traffic Safety Foundation, the group's purpose is to "support, enhance, and augment the safety program of the federal government."

In a letter introducing the group to corporate executives, executive director Stephen A. Jacobs said, "Some attempts by government to regulate and to legislate traffic safety have been unproductive, detrimental to economic growth, and burdensome to the people of America as tax payers and as citizens whose freedom to express personal choice is paramount." Jacobs, who did not specify which "attempts" he is referring to, said one of the first programs the organization would become involved in would be NHTSA's safety belt campaign.

Although none of the foundation's staff has had previous experience in the traffic safety field, the fund-raising effort has won the apparent support of NHTSA head Raymond Peck. In a prospectus accompanying the letter, Jacobs said Peck would be a member of the foundation's board, but Peck resigned December 11.

In a letter to Jacobs, Peck both praised the organization and withdrew from an official role, saying there "could be an appearance of impropriety for the administrator to serve on the board of trustees."

Two brief letters signed by President Reagan praising the program have accompanied Jacobs' fund-raising letters to corporate executives.

The federally-funded study generating the formation of the foundation was conducted by Jacobs but is not yet public, NHTSA officials have told *Status Report*. A copy made available privately revealed the NHTSA administrator was to have served on the foundation's board ex-officio.

## FTC Urged To Sharpen Warnings On Jeep CJ-5s

In response to a solicitation for comments by the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), two organizations have urged that the agency be more specific in the warning labels it has proposed be required for Jeep CJ vehicles to inform owners of the hazards of on-road use.

(Cont'd on next page)

## **FTC Urged To Sharpen Warnings On Jeep CJ-5s (Cont'd from page 3)**

Both the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety and the Center for Auto Safety, a consumer organization, objected to the language in the proposed consent order designed to notify Jeep operators that the vehicle "handles and maneuvers differently from an ordinary passenger car." (See *Status Report*, Vol. 16, No. 19, Dec. 9, 1981.) Comments from both organizations urged that it be clearly stated that under certain highway conditions the Jeep CJ vehicles are prone to roll over. The proposed agreement had used the phrase, "loss of control."

"If operators are misled into believing that the problem is simply possible loss of control, which does not sound as potentially dangerous as rollover, they may underestimate the risk involved," the Institute said in a letter submitted to the FTC comment file.

"'Loss of control' is unacceptably vague," the Center for Auto Safety commented. The Center for Auto Safety also said the proposed agreement is defective in that it fails to prohibit further "deceptive advertising."

These comments were two of the four received by the FTC when its 60-day public comment period ended February 2. The others consisted of a suggestion by a Sacramento, Calif., law firm that a similar warning be required for the Toyota Land Cruiser, and a defense of the Jeep CJ-5 by the California Association of 4WD Clubs, which said, "We have never before in over twenty years heard that this vehicle has bad highway handling characteristics, in spite of the fact our programs and members are strong on vehicle safety."

The public comment period having closed, the FTC will review the docket and may issue a consent order on a final basis.

## **Tax Incentives For Air Bags Draw Support**

In a hearing before the Senate Subcommittee on Taxation and Debt Management, auto insurers' and consumers' representatives have endorsed a bill offering tax incentives for air bag installation in cars.

Of those testifying at the January 28 hearing, only a Ford Motor Co. official opposed the measure, saying the auto maker is now engaged in talks with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) aimed at setting up an air bag demonstration program.

Air bags will save lives and tax dollars, the bill's author, Sen. John C. Danforth (R. - Mo.), told the committee. NHTSA figures show the government pays about \$6 billion annually in Medicare, Medicaid, and disability payments attributable to automobile crash injuries. The bill, S. 1887, proposes a \$300 tax credit for domestic auto manufacturers for each car produced with air bags, and a \$300 excise tax on the sale of domestic and foreign autos sold without air bags. (See *Status Report*, Vol. 16, No. 20, Dec. 21, 1981.)

Ultimately, said Danforth, taxpayers could save around \$3.8 billion each year if air bags were in all cars, and up to 9,000 lives could be saved annually. Estimates prepared by the staff of the Joint Committee on Taxation project revenue losses attributable to the tax credit would average \$1 billion for each year the tax credit remained in place.

Danforth said he was "not wedded to a single word" of the bill. "I am, however, committed to the passage of legislation which will make this long overdue safety technology widely available in the U.S.," he said. Danforth is a member of the Senate Finance Committee and chairs the Commerce Committee's Subcommittee on Surface Transportation.

### **Institute Film Shown**

At Danforth's request, William Haddon, Jr., M.D., president of the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, opened the hearing by presenting a new Institute film, "Faces in Crashes." (See page 1.) Before introducing the film, Haddon said, "the statement that more than 50,000 people are killed each year has become something of a cliché. . . . What this really means is that more than 50,000 Americans each year are literally torn, crushed, and lacerated to death in split seconds."