

# Lower speed limit has its limitations

Are most motorists obeying the 55 mph speed limit? Is it saving gasoline and lives? What are its drawbacks? Engineers at the Highway Users Federation have been studying these questions since the national speed limit was approved Jan. 2, 1974, and have come up with some answers.

On main rural roads, where the temptation to speed is greatest, about half of all drivers exceed the 55 mph speed limit. But before the 55 limit, about 70 percent of all drivers exceeded 55 mph, burning up far more gasoline than they now do.

The average driver on an intercity trip who, reluctantly or not, has reduced his speed five, 10 or 30 miles per hour, knows he goes farther on each tank of gas. If he now drives a little under 40 in an average car when he used to go between 70 and 75, he has boosted his fuel efficiency at least 15 per cent.

He now goes 30 miles farther on each ten gallons of gasoline, saving one gallon for every 100 miles of intercity driving.

BETWEEN JAN. 1974 and July 1975, cars, trucks and buses traveled 650 billion miles on intercity roads and highways. At pre-55 speeds, they would have used three billion extra gallons of gasoline. Now they are saving those three billion gallons which is

more than enough to keep all the cars in Indiana and Arizona going for one year.

On the safety side, engineers say there is no doubt about traffic safety improvement since the advent of the 55 mph limit. But they also say there are many different findings and opinions on how much of the safety improvement has been caused by the drop in speed alone.

New travel characteristics and traffic patterns have also boosted safety. More of the traffic on main rural roads now travels at about the same speed, cutting the hazards of passing and overtaking. This uniform traffic flow is a more significant factor in the accident reduction than the speed

limit, engineers said.

One drawback to the 55 mph speed limit is the growing body of bureaucratic regulations which place heavy administrative, manpower, and financial burdens on state highway and traffic law enforcement agencies. Another drawback is the possibility of unrealistic goals for driver compliance.

FEDERAL regulations which demand 90 per cent compliance with the 55 mph speed limit by 1977 stand about as much chance of public acceptance as prohibition did, say many observers. Some highways are designed to handle higher speeds safely, and the motorist, public knows it. Another drawback is the danger that arbitrary national speed limits may be seen as a panacea for solving all traffic safety problems, when in fact a balanced safety program cov-

ering engineering, education and law enforcement, will always be needed. So, those who have studied the effects of the 55 mph speed limit say that on balance, it is working and working well. But they also caution against expecting too much from it.

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## Jaycees, YFU offer nine scholarships

Youth For Understanding, the largest teenager student program in the world, is teaming up with the Michigan Jaycees to offer scholarships to nine youth to carry Bicentennial greetings to foreign countries during the summer of 1976.

This is a part of a national project sponsored by Youth For Understanding called the Bicentennial Courier Program. In it, 184 youths will be selected nationwide to go to foreign countries during America's 200th birthday.

Each youth will be delivering Bicentennial messages to one of 23 countries around the world.

The Honorable George Romney, former Governor of Michigan, is the honorary chairman of the Bicentennial Courier Program Committee in the state.

To qualify as one of the nine Michigan couriers, students will be selected on the basis of a 700 to 1000 word essay written about American's Bicentennial. The essay subject can be on one of three broad topics: "The Nation's Heritage," "Future Horizons," or "The Benefits of Sharing." They must be submitted to the Youth For Understanding Bicentennial Coordinator by Feb. 1. The winners will be selected on or before April 1, and designated as official Bicentennial Couriers.

Youth For Understanding, Inc., one of the co-sponsors of the Michigan program, is an organization dedicated to fostering greater international understanding through overseas living experiences among young people.

The other co-sponsor, the Michigan Jaycees, is a young men's organization whose active members are be-

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## Husky club holds match

The Siberian Husky Club of South-eastern Michigan will hold a fun match and obedience trial for AKC registered Siberian Husky puppies and adults on Sunday, Jan. 25, at Livonia Mall, Middle Belt at Seven Mile in Livonia.

Entries will be taken at noon, and judging will start at 1 p.m. John Fotis will judge conformation and junior handling classes. Obedience entries will be judged by Bill Nevers.

Classes in conformation will include puppies from 2-12 months, adults and litters of two or more puppies. Obedience trial classes include sub-volice, novice and open. There will be ribbons, trophies and photographs to all winners.

Dogs with major AKC points are not allowed in the match.

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