



The Chevrolet Cavalier was the best selling car in the United States last year. The 1985 model has a new interior trim and

colors and 10 new exterior colors. It offers an optional port-injected 2.8 liter V6 engine.

Industry leads in auto safety

Automotive safety was not invented in Washington, D.C., it's the talk of recent years. Safety has long been a concern in the automobile industry, long before federal standards were established, says the Automobile Information Council (AIC).

In fact, says the AIC, 15 of the first 20 federal automotive safety standards were adaptations of industry standards for safety features manufacturers were already installing, or they were based on industry-sponsored research.

Long before federal standards were even written, the manufacturers were demonstrating leadership in the field of traffic safety by improving vehicle design.

Back in 1950, when cars were still "horseless carriages," the steering wheel replaced the rubber-like steering stick, adding safety as well as convenience.

In the next decade came the all-steel body, rear-view mirror, shock absorbers and the electric horn.

STEEL WHEELS, two-beam headlights, laminated windshield glass, four-wheel hydraulic brakes, balloon tires and windshield wipers revolutionized vehicles produced in the '20s.

The '30s brought improved steering gears, power brakes, defroster and sealed-beam headlamps; while the '40s introduced double hood latches, padded instrument panels and self-adjusting brakes. An innovation early in this period was the turn signal — a wide-angle improvement over the practice of hanging one's arm out the window to indicate a change in direction.

As the automobile population mushroomed in the

post-war '50s, safety became an even more important factor. Seat belts, head restraints, energy-absorbing steering wheels and impact-resistant door latches were added.

Since then, improved door latch mechanisms and safer air bags have good examples of the industry's original approach to finding major safety problems — without regulation.

Safety studies have consistently demonstrated that people are injured or killed when they are thrown from their vehicles in an accident, or into the windshield or other interior car surface.

The simplest solution is to keep the person in the car and away from the windshield. The best way to accomplish this was with restraint systems. But, many people won't wear belts, so vehicles were designed to lessen injuries in other ways like improved door latch mechanisms and safety windshields.

THE EARLIEST safety standards have also proven to be the most valuable.

In the detailed report, the U.S. government said motor vehicle safety standards implemented between 1966 and 1970 saved 23,225 lives between 1966 and 1974. There was little, if any, further improvement in lives saved from additional standards imposed on 1971 to 1973 model cars, according to the study's findings.

Vehicle design technology has increased in recent years so that the newer smaller cars make more efficient use of structure and energy management than was possible before. The use of computers and computer programs developed over the past decade have aided domestic manufacturers in the effort.

As the automobile population mushroomed in the

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