

Memorial weekend traffic will mount

This Memorial Day weekend could have the heaviest traffic since 1972 when a record 767 million miles were logged on state roads, according to Automobile Club of Michigan.

Last Memorial Day weekend, when fears of gas shortages still persisted, Michigan motorists traveled an estimated 657 million miles on state highways.

Despite unemployment, recession and high fuel prices, Auto Club member routing requests for Michigan destinations increased 74 per cent for the first four months of 1975 as compared to January-April of 1974.

"Admittedly fuel shortages caused a travel slump in early 1974, but our records show 1975 Michigan trip routings are running 32 per cent ahead of the same period in 1973 when energy crisis problems had yet to significantly materialize," says Joseph Ratke, Auto Club touring manager.

COMPARED TO 1974, Lower Peninsula routing requests increased 83 per cent for the 1975 January-April period. Upper Peninsula routings jumped 53 per cent with a 12 per cent increase recorded for Mackinac Bridge crossings in the first four months of this year.

The Memorial Day weekend officially begins at 6 p.m. tomorrow Friday and ends at midnight Monday (May 27). Peak travel times during the 78-hour holiday will be from 7-10 p.m. Friday, when most motorists head for holiday destinations, and from 2-10 p.m. Monday, the major return-home time.

"Frustrating traffic delays can be minimized if motorists begin trips before or after these time periods. This advice is especially recommended for travelers along I-75 between Bridgeport and Saginaw this holiday.

"This 18-mile stretch is the only major area in the state where motorists may find traffic problems due to highway work. Although work will be suspended over the Memorial Day weekend, I-75 will be narrowed from three to two lanes at several points due to overpass construction."

GAS AVAILABILITY is one problem motorists shouldn't encounter this holiday, Ratke says.

The Auto Club's most recent "fuel gauge" survey shows all stations checked along major tourist routes open daylight hours Monday through Saturday with 88 per cent operating Sunday. Nearly half of stations surveyed are operating after 9 p.m. daily, and an average 12 per cent stay open past midnight.

Last Memorial Day weekend, holiday motorists found an average 80 per cent of stations operating during the day, about 23 per cent after 9 p.m. and 11 per cent after midnight.

Regular fuel now sells for an average 37.3 cents per gallon along major tourist routes, 22 cents less than a year ago.


Motorists are urged to drive with extra caution this weekend because the expected upswing in holiday travel will increase the likelihood of fatal accidents.

Last Memorial Day weekend, when tourism was relatively light, 20 persons were killed on state roads. This compares with 26 highway deaths over the heavily traveled 1973 Memorial Day holiday.

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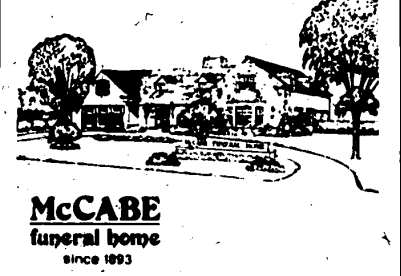
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- If you're going to cook one dish in the oven, why not use it for the entire meal? Time your baking for multiple uses. Put a pie in with a roast...bake two cakes and freeze one.
- Fit the pan to the surface burner being used. Cover pots and pans so less heat escapes. And thaw frozen foods in your refrigerator to reduce cooking time.
- Small appliances such as toasters, electric skillets, toaster ovens, and popcorn poppers generally use less energy for specialized jobs than does the range.
- The kitchen isn't the only room where you can save energy, but it's a good place to start. Remember, energy conservation is a must.



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