

FLAGship IN BRIEF

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Michael Kemp reporting affairs as he finds them



Stem petrol/derv waste in fight against recession

'Cut road fuel costs by 15% or even 33%'

ECONOMIC ALERT: Slash business car and van fuel bills by 15 per cent by eliminating waste. Even "33 per cent is possible", claims an expert.

First, introduce eco-driving as company policy - now.

A pot of money is up for grabs, that employers should no longer ignore in belt-tightening gloom of rising prices and a likely 2008 recession. Employees will never be more receptive to prudence.

"One-in-three litres is the staggering amount of petrol/derv being wasted by UK employees, because they don't know about eco-driving and don't care," states driver training guru Professor Peter Russell, Britain's most qualified expert in his field.

"Saving a third is academic," claims Peter Jones, head of Universal Driver Training in Camberley, Surrey, that teaches 'defensive eco driving for professional drivers'.

"A 15 or 16 per cent fuel saving is realistic in today's unpredictable traffic - IF drivers know how, IF their employers teach them. Preventing cash waste is a growing importance."

Back to Prof. Russell:-

Driving to conserve fuel is in the mind. Few working car and van drivers have been taught how to 'think' eco-driving, that:-

BRAKING wastes fuel. So **MINIMISE** braking by eliminating its necessity.

READ the road ahead to decelerate with-

out braking in order to stop in the right place with perhaps just a tap of the brake pedal at your point of arrival.

ADJUST your speed to be always just in time to stop at or pass an obstacle in safety.

TO DRIVE through a series of traffic lights without stopping, so that you never need to brake, is a great skill in vehicle control and accurate assessment of the road ahead.

PLAN your driving ahead by looking, reading the traffic scene, and planning your approach. That is a constantly, on-going ever-changing process.

HILLS are no exception. Plan ahead to require minimum extra acceleration uphill and no braking down, all in total safety.

BE FEATHER light on the accelerator and even lighter on the brake pedal. The good eco-driver can save £33 for every £100 spent on fuel by the heavy-footed driver.

Up to 15 per cent of family motorists are eco-drivers but only around five per cent are fully fuel thrifty with maximum safety. Working car driver eco-skills are statistically nil. Van drivers rate sub-zero.)

DEFENSIVE driving cuts fuel use by 16 per cent averaging over £400-p/a saving p/car, says Drive & Survive at Bloxham, Oxon. Its half-day economy course is £160 - amortized in 20-weeks.

Universal Driver Training defensive eco-driving course is £275-day for two people - one each morning/afternoon.

150mpg hybrid car in 2010

A 150mpg hybrid coupe, GM's Chevrolet Volt, is due in 2010. It targets being wholly electrically driven by batteries that are constantly recharged by a 1-litre petrol engine.

TOYOTA'S petrol-electric hybrid 51-66mpg Prius 5-door car, still beating growing opposition, is to get more economy from an upgraded lithium ion battery in 2009.

NEW 'HUMID' dual-clutching in 6-speed automatics is bringing 2pc more mpg, says inventor Borg-Warner, auto-transmission specialist to VW, Audi, Bugatti, Nissan and Getrag.

E-MAILED motor insurance certificates have received official go-ahead "for more reliable delivery" and to "save UK insurers £5-10m a year".

A REVISED Highway Code "promotes greater courtesy and understanding among all road users, particularly the most vulnerable". H&S demands it is read by working drivers.

YOU are three times more likely to be killed in a car on a rural road than an urban one, warns the DfT's 'THINK! Rural Speed' campaign. So, stay aware of road conditions.

HOLOGRAPHIC instrument panel control and display, and roadside plug-in recharging for hybrid car batteries, are two of seven new Honda research projects at US universities.

Smart way to expand profit!

BENEFITS of integrating vehicle telematics with driver risk management are:-

Higher mpg, lower CO₂, fewer crash claims, cheaper insurance, lower maintenance cost, full audit trail, proven H&S compliance, plus...

IT integration, more efficient driver resource management, online overtime and mileage claims, reduced

(diesel?) engine idling, reduced mobile phone use, and reduced out of hours vehicle use.

Telematics and IT systems specialist SunGard Vivista says: "Through assessment of resources, costs, work patterns, driver profiles, and allied factors we can provide systems to meet all business needs."

Integrated IT technology

includes:-

Exception based alerts, driver control access, engine management data, web-based tracking, bespoke reporting, street level mapping, 'historical' analysis, and messaging.

Added services can include a digital pen, telephony, route planning and navigation, container / trailer units.