



Bruce Canepa: Big or fast, motors power his life and company.

BEFORE the steam locomotive was invented in the 19th century, accepted medical opinion clearly stated that humans couldn't survive the stress of traveling at 20 miles per hour.

Today, legislation and thousands of highway patrol officers can't keep people from driving slower than 70 miles per hour in machines that would have left Richard Trevithick (the locomotive's inventor) struck dumb.

Cars are more than a method of transportation for us. They make up a large part of our identity; they're a measure of our success; they can show instantly what type of person we are. People who drive Lamborghinis aren't likely to hang out with owners of Ford Fiestas.

Cars are part of our history; we can tell instantly which decade of the 20th century a photograph was taken or when a movie is set by the type of cars in the picture.

Cars are part of our mythology, inspiring a reverence. Thousands flock to museums to see the original Batmobile, Elvis' gold Cadillac, James Bond's Aston-Martin, even Disney's Herbie, the Love Bug.

Cars are an integral part of our modern society. People who live in Bonny Doon or at the summit would be lost without motorized transport to get them to Safeway and Macy's, not to mention their jobs. Without a driver's license, a person can't buy liquor or cash a check, or even open a banking account.

From the simplest beater, held together by chewing gum and running on a prayer to a \$½ million hand-built racing machine, there are as many individual car personalities as there are drivers. Here's a look at some of those types, and at what cars mean to our economy.

COVER STORY

"The automobile has not merely taken over the street, it has dissolved the living tissue of the city. Its appetite for space is absolutely insatiable; moving and parked, it devours urban land, leaving the buildings as mere islands of habitable space in a sea of dangerous and ugly traffic. ... Gas-filled, noisy and hazardous, our streets have become the most inhumane landscape in the world."

— James Marston Fitch
Professor of Architecture
Columbia University

by Sam Mitchell

Autos Fuel the Economy

Diatribes against cars are as easy to find as rusted-out auto shells scarring the Santa Cruz Mountains, but one fact remains that only the most footsore pedestrian could argue with: Cars have become such an integral part of society that life without them would irrevocably alter humankind's existence, and the change would not necessarily be for the better, despite what critics say.

Nowhere is that maxim any more true than in Santa Cruz, where —

depending on how you read the statistics — the automobile-related industry is the single biggest moneymaker in the city, and probably in the county. Bigger than tourism (which is an auto-dependent business itself), and bigger than agriculture.

"It is *the* major business in the entire United States" with the possible exception of government, said Lee Courtright, owner of the Datsun-Dodge dealership and co-

owner of the Toyota dealership.

"A million bucks," said city finance director Bob Shepherd, when asked to estimate how much money the city makes from auto sales and car-related businesses.

Accurate statistics in the diverse auto-related fields are difficult to come by, but what statistics there are lend credence to those claims.

The state board of equalization, which tracks taxable sales in counties around California, reported

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Economy Fueled (continued from page 13)

almost \$82.6 million in auto-related sales in the third quarter (July-August) of 1986. Of that figure, more than \$47 million was for new car sales, and some \$19 million was from service stations. The remainder was shared among auto parts stores, used car sales, camper sales and motorcycle sales.

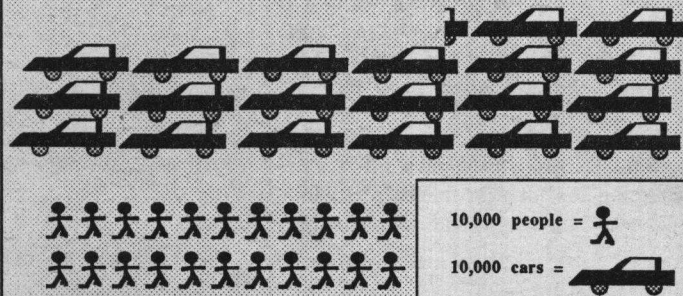
In all, auto-related sales accounted for more than 20 percent of the county's \$362,732,000 of taxable transactions in that quarter. (In comparison, all dining out sales for the same period, including spirits, came to \$41 million. All clothing sales came to \$11 million. And grocery stores only took in \$17 million.) Those figures don't include things such as auto insurance, car washes and auto-related bank business, which would boost the economic importance of cars to this community even further. The figures also don't include the number of people our car culture employs, but the state's employment data and research department was glad to give us some estimates there, as well:

In all, 3,272 people were employed in auto-related businesses in Santa Cruz County last year. That figure includes 840 car salespersons and managers, 582 service station employees and 463 mechanics. Like the taxable sales figures, it does not include car washers, auto insurance brokers, emergency room physicians and others that would bring home a lot less bacon if it weren't for cars.

(Also, those figures are probably about 25 percent shy of the actual numbers, according to a state offi-

Cars to People Ratio In Santa Cruz County

Sources: State Department of Motor Vehicles, U.S. Census Bureau.



There are 220,000 people in the county who share 201,000 motorized land vehicles (registered with the Department of Motor Vehicles) between them.

cial, making a more realistic number about 5,000 — which, of course, does not include county residents who work in auto-related businesses in other counties.)

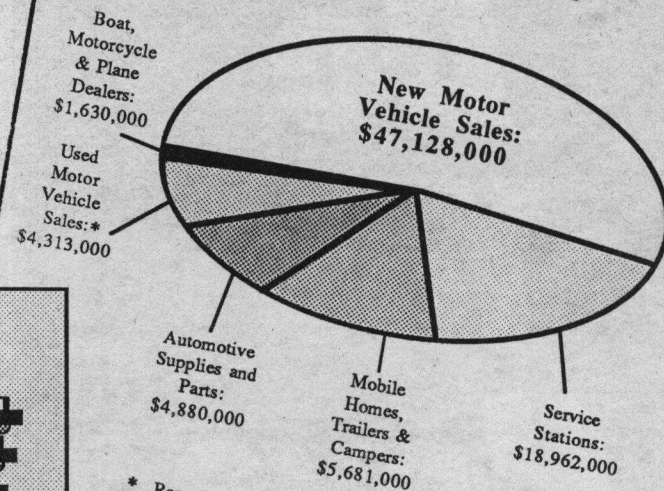
The sheer number of cars in the county is enough to make Henry Ford's first crankshaft roll over in its grave. County residents, which number some 220,000, registered 201,000 vehicles last year. Of that figure, 133,000 were cars. In other words:

If everyone in Santa Cruz County were to take a Sunday drive to L.A. next weekend, it would be bumper-to-bumper the entire way. Or, if everyone were to simply drive around the 1,000 miles of road in our county boundaries, there would be one car every 26 feet.

Remember, of course, that figure assumes that our neighbors from over the hill decided to leave their own "insolent chariots" at home.

Automotive Money Spent in Santa Cruz County

July-September, 1986
Information from State Board of Equalization
Total amount represented:
\$82,594,000



* Represents figures from dealers only. Does not include data from sales by individual owners.

Total Taxable Sales in Santa Cruz County

July-September 1986
Information from State Board of Equalization.
Total amount represented:
\$362,732,000

