

Bad roads boost driving costs by \$265 million

HARRISBURG— Rough, rutted roads cost Pennsylvania drivers an extra \$265 million a year in fuel, tire wear and vehicle repairs, says a new study.

Bumpy, broken pavement boosts driving costs by an average of 41 per cent a year over the cost of travel on a smooth road surface, according to The Road Information Program (TRIP), of Washington, D.C.

The research and information agency found:

- Thirty-per cent of Penn-

sylvania's 34,228 miles of main roads are deficient by federal inspection standards. This includes 7,830 miles rated "fair" and 2,438 miles rated "poor."

- It costs an average of 41.3 per cent more to drive on the "fair" and "poor" roads than on "good" roads, or 9 cents-per-mile versus 6.4 cents-per-mile.

- The state's drivers traveled 10 billion vehicle miles in 1975, the latest year of record, on "poor" and "fair" main roads at a total cost of \$905.3 million. Had these roads been in "good" condition, the travel would have cost \$640.7 million - a saving of \$264.6 million.

The roads in TRIP's study are the arterial and collector systems. They account for 30 per cent of Pennsylvania's 115,187 mile total road system but handle 76 per cent of the traffic.

"Pennsylvania motorists are paying a premium to drive on uncomfortable, hazardous roads," said TRIP spokesman Henry D. Harral of Honeybrook, who announced the study finding.

Harral is a former secretary of the Pennsylvania Highway Department.

"Road agencies have fallen behind in road renewal in recent years because of a lack of funds," Harral said. "The problem is aggravated by the fact that nearly \$100 million in road-user tax revenues are used for other state services."

Harral said the state needs to preserve and protect its roads to minimize maintenance costs and reduce the number of accidents where poor pavement is a factor.

TRIP estimates it would cost \$1.3 billion to rebuild the 2,438 miles of roads in "poor" condition and \$951.3 million to resurface the 7,830 miles of roads considered "fair." Many of the roads involved are eligible for federal-aid funds covering between 70 and 90 per cent of the total cost.

An adequate road renewal program is essential to keep pace with an estimated 16 per cent increase in traffic volume in Pennsylvania by 1987 says the study.

The recommended road improvements would last from 12 to 25 years depending on pavement type, thickness and foundation, traffic conditions, weather and terrain, says TRIP.

TRIP's findings are based on scientific road tests that measured fuel consumption and tire and vehicle wear

relative to the physical condition of the pavement in use. Road tests were conducted by Paul J. Claffey and Associates of Potsdam, New York.

The tests showed that drivers used up to one-third more fuel when stopping or slowing to pass safely over

rough, broken pavement before resuming normal speed.

Driving on substandard pavement also increased tire wear by an average of 156 per cent a year and accelerated brake, steering and suspension system wear by an average of 72 per cent, according to the tests.

Soil Scientists return to the field

LANCASTER, Pa. — It is that time of year when once again soil survey parties like Donald Holzer and Boyd Custer can be seen in the fields continuing soil mapping (identifying a soil and delineating the soil area on an aerial photo).

Many people mistakenly believe that a soil survey

comes to a standstill during the Winter months, but that's not true. Only the field work ceases but important work is accomplished during the Winter.

Such things as the writing of soil descriptions, the summarizing of field notes and the transfer of soil lines from temporary maps to

more permanent sheets and more were done last Winter.

However, Spring is one of the best times for mapping soils, because the fields are relatively open and free of crops. Both Holzer and Custer, who work out of the U.S. Soil Conservation Service (SCS) Office, Farm and Home Center Building, Lancaster, agree that Spring and early Summer are the best times to review landforms and soils in particular.

So, once again these two men will be seen somewhere in Lancaster County doing the job they were asked to do by local government.

"Identification of a soil area by looking at the soil layers (horizons) from the surface down to five or more feet, is the name of the game," explained Custer. "The local people have in the past been quite cooperative in allowing us access to their land so that we can do our job, which means walking, augering, taking notes and often taking soil samples," Custer further adds.

Horticulture

[Continued from Page 57]

state for further testing under the direction of Extension Specialists and County Agents," said Hepler. "These same people provide ideas to keep our research program in tune with the needs of farmers." Potato research and extension work, a responsibility of the Department of Horticulture since April 1, 1976 is typical, with much of the work conducted with cooperating farmers around the state.

"Our work in floriculture has a direct tie-in to ex-

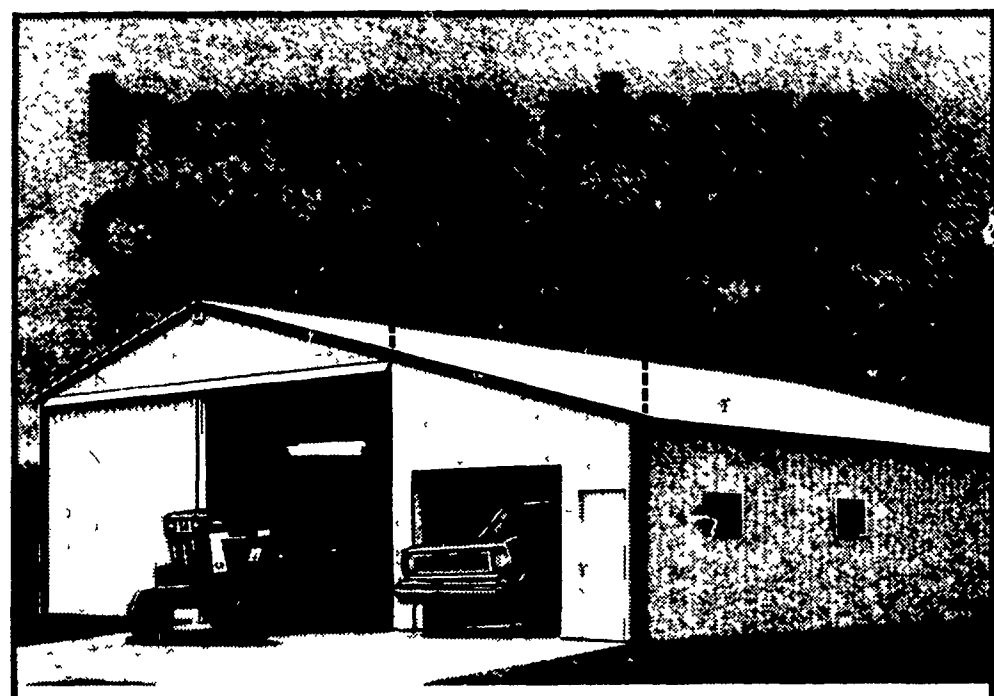
tension programs", remarked the professor. "As the interest developed for green plants, we provided production schedules for greenhouse operators; as this demand tapers off in favor of flowering plants, we're ready with improved varieties. Our research on curtains for conserving heat and solar collection systems for greenhouses, projects involving several research departments, were inspired by concerns brought to us through extension personnel".

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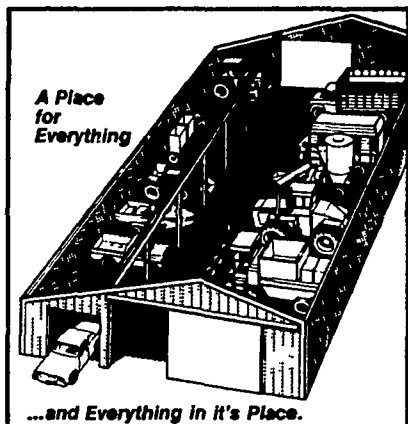


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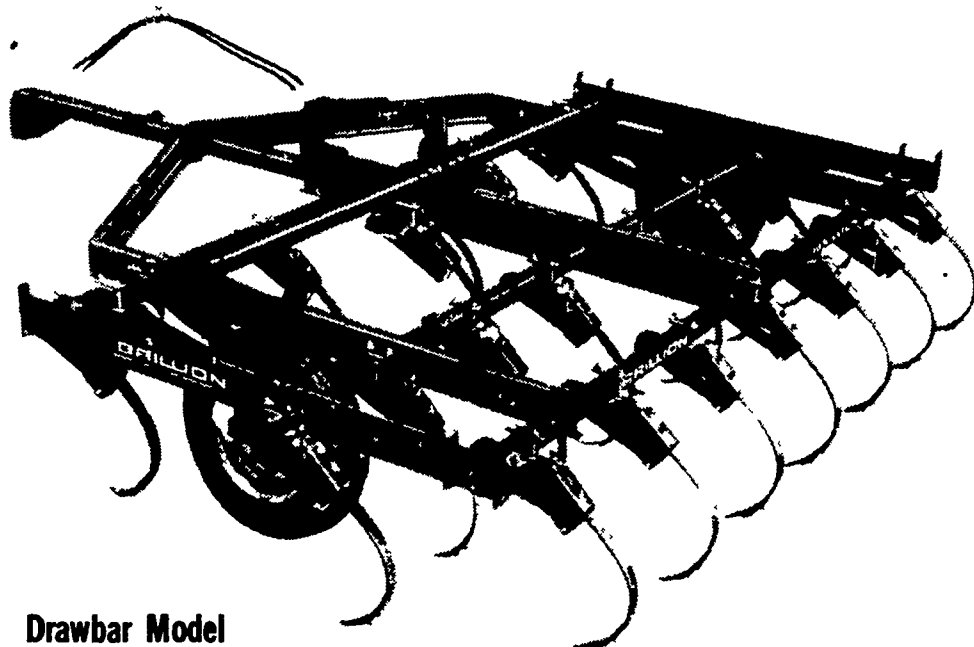
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