

# Car trouble?

Auto-medec can save the day and maybe some money

By MARY STEPHENS  
Collegian Staff Writer

A brown Ford sits on the side of deserted Waddle Road on a bitter cold night. The driver turns the key in the ignition expecting to hear the hum of the motor, but instead hears nothing but silence.

As despair begins to sink in, he notices the headlights of a car pulling up behind him. It is the red and white Oldsmobile of Auto-medec, the paramedics of car service, to the aid of the motorist victimized by a dead battery.

Auto-medec offers a new type of car service, say co-owners Keith Hardin and Bernie Guyon. For a fee slightly less than a garage will charge, Auto-medec will come to a home, office, a roadway, parking lot or wherever a car is in need of service. They also stop when they see motorists having trouble on the side of a roadway as in the above example.

"If we're at home and you say, 'My car won't start' we'll be there in a matter of minutes," Guyon says. "That's primarily what we're offering — convenience. Our philosophy is fix cars and see they don't break again."

Auto-medec does not have a garage, but instead fixes the problem on the spot or at a customer's home. The mechanics will not haul a car away, but will help a stranded motorist make arrangements to have it towed, if Auto-medec cannot fix it on the spot.

The only work Auto-medec will not do is rear- and front-end alignments and engine rebuilding, Hardin says. Alignments require equipment to lift the car that they do not have and rebuilding an engine becomes too involved.

One in 20 times, Hardin estimates, he and Guyon cannot repair the car.

"In my experiences as a mechanic," Hardin says, "I've found that people call when it's too late

— when it's time to jack up the key and put a new car under it."

For this reason Hardin and Guyon are developing a new service that offers car owners what they call a preventive maintenance system. For a fee of \$10 per year they will inspect the wearable systems on the car about every two months and keep an accurate service history. If the car needs service, the owner may choose to have Auto-medec, himself or someone else do the work.

Hardin and Guyon met when they were both interviewing for a sales position in a car dealership. Hardin, 26, who studied mechanics at a vocational-technical high school, received further training at a Midas Muffler Shop and car dealerships. Guyon, 39, a Youngstown College graduate in geography, was a ship machinist in the Navy and has held business and management jobs. They decided to join forces and try to make it despite the risks.

"I don't basically have anything to lose and a lot to gain," says Hardin, who has been unemployed for three months. "Work is hard to find. I know quite a few mechanics working as janitors for the University."

Guyon and Hardin say they like being their own boss. "It's nice not worrying if your boss will get involved with politics and fire you the next day," Guyon says.

The independence and satisfaction derived from their new business makes it worth the risk, they say. Even though they started with nothing, they broke even with about a \$500 profit in the first month and a half.

"Both of our wives work, which really helped us to make ends meet," Hardin says.

"We're serving people and that's gratifying," Guyon says.

"There are two reasons why I get satisfaction from this kind of work," Hardin says. "First I'm

helping someone else and secondly I'm helping myself."

Auto-medec's clients seem pleased with Hardin and Guyon. One is Dave Walker, a freshman majoring in theatre who worked as the Santa Claus at the Nittany Mall this holiday season.

"They came every time my old Ford has not been running," he says. Auto-medec gave Walker's car a tune-up for \$5 or \$6 cheaper than the garage to which he formerly went.

Kathy Janes of 511 E. Bishop St., Bellefonte, says she called Auto-medec after a garage gave her an estimate of \$370 for repairs before her car could pass inspection. Auto-medec repaired her car for \$174.

Although Guyon and Hardin enjoy their work, it is not without its problems. One of the most difficult problems Auto-medec faces is earning people's trust, they say. Guyon and Hardin hope that once people know they exist and have something to offer they will be trusted.

Their clients have been increasing by word-of-mouth.

"We're not out to rip anyone off," Hardin says. "We're not out to make a million dollars. The whole thing is very profitable for the customer by saving him major repair bills in the future."

"The first reaction," Guyon says, "is that we're a fly-by-night operation. Now it's like we're door-to-door salesmen."

To establish themselves as a legitimate business, Auto-medec encourages people to watch them critically, Guyon says. "We want you to know exactly what we're doing."

State College is a good place to a business of this type, he says.

"In a small town," Guyon says, "You can't make many mistakes."

Guyon and Hardin are optimistic about making Auto-medec a success.

# United Way surpasses funding goal by \$5,000

By MIKE NETHERLAND  
Collegian Staff Writer

Because of the depressed economy, especially in the mining and manufacturing sectors, the Centre County United Way had a tougher than usual time meeting its annual fund raising goal, the agency's executive director Dennis Kulchycski said.

After extending the Thanksgiving Day deadline, the \$440,000 mark was reached on Christmas Eve and was eventually surpassed by \$5,863. Kulchycski attributed most of the excess to the incentive of tax-deductible contributions.

"We had some difficulty because of unemployment in some areas, but fortunately there were some areas not as severely affected by the recession. Those who were working, contributed generously," Kulchycski said.

Unfortunately, a successful campaign was not the case for about 25 percent of the 98 United Way offices in the state. Kulchycski said his native Beaver County, for example, raised only \$1.4 million this year while in 1981 it was able to raise more than \$2.1 million.

Kulchycski said management of this year's campaign, which cost

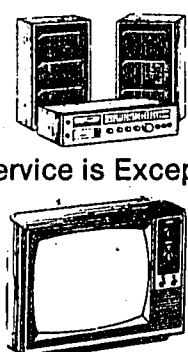
\$36,000 to run, was simplified because of a donation by HRB Singer Inc. The State College-based firm, which develops and produces highly-classified signal processing systems for the U.S. Department of Defense, donated one of its computer programmers for "three solid months" last May, he said.

The programmer developed a program for the United Way's mini-computer to compile financial data and ran a word processor. Kulchycski said the programmer's time would normally have cost between \$10,000 and \$12,000.

"Larger United Way offices have been computerized for some time," he said, but added that it's difficult for smaller offices to obtain the necessary equipment and software.

Detailed allocations of the \$445,863 will not be made until the Centre County United Way board of directors' meeting on Jan. 18, Kulchycski said. He added, however, that funds requested by the 28 agencies served by the Centre County United Way were approved in December, and so far those agencies should get 100 percent of the requested funds.

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