TTI Produces 'Light Rocks'

Lightweight synthetic rock being developed by the Texas Transportation Institute at Texas A&M University may virtually eliminate windshield damage on state highways.

Although the TTI research project is geared toward other objectives, the effect of lightweight stone on windshields is a major bonus particularly for car owners and insurance companies.

Bob M. Gallaway, head of TTI's Highway Materials Department, is directing a program for evaluating use of the synthetic lightweight rock as coverstone for

seal coats on Texas highways. "We are seeking to determine whether synthetic materials should be accepted as equal to pre-coated limestone," Gallaway

TURNING TO the effects of natural stone and synthetic stone on windshields, the researcher said the new substitute is far less hazardous.

"Of hundreds of test shots made using synthetic stone, only one break was observed in 'used' windshields," he reported. "However, heavy natural stone caused severe damage to windshields in six of ten shots."

The "shots" were from an air gun fired at varying pressures to produce "flying stone" conditions. Shots in both tests were fired at a distance of 10 feet from the

Gallaway noted that stone of normal density, when kicked up by a motor vehicle, may be expected to strike a windshield at speeds up to 150 miles per hour and result in breakage. The lighter stone, however, caused virtually no damage to windshield

OTHER FINDINGS in laboratory and field tests on farm-tomarket roads show skid resistance is increased by using synthetic stone because the road surface does not become as polished or slick as natural stone.

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