



Mike Love, Jim McKinney and John Campbell think about past and future work on the 1970 modified Honda to be entered in a national contest in August. There are 11 other students working on the mechanical engineering project which is to build a methanol powered car. Battalion photo by Kayce Glasse

Gas mileage is 70 mpg from gas substitute

# Aggies create energy-efficient car

By SCOTT D. HARING  
Battalion reporter

the United States, was brought back from Vietnam by a serviceman.

The Honda is being modified to run on vaporized methanol. Methanol can be manufactured from coal, making it a good energy alternative. The team's goal is to reach a gasoline equivalent of 70 miles per gallon.

Love said the team first planned to run some tests on the car with a standard gasoline engine and then a liquid methanol engine, but they've had some delays in performing the tests at the Texas Transportation Institute's research annex. Love said the team can't afford to wait any longer and is going ahead with the vaporized methanol conversion without the preliminary tests.

Even though the main purpose of the contest is to develop an energy-efficient vehicle, the entries will also be judged on handling, braking, emissions and cost to the consumer. The car also will have to meet 1980 federal safety requirements.

After the cars are rated on these different factors, Love said the judges also award points for the originality of the design. For this reason, the Texas A&M team is also working on a suspension system to improve handling, modified aerodynamics and a passive restraint system. A passive restraint system is one like an air bag that doesn't need to be hooked up by the driver.

The winners of the competition to be held at the General Motors proving grounds in Dearborn, Mich., will receive trophies for themselves and recognition for their schools.

The Texas A&M team is the only entry from Texas or the four surrounding states. Love is optimistic about the Aggies' chances. "We picked a good car to work with," he said. "It's innovative in its own

right." Love said they hope to get the car running on methanol within the next few weeks. Then, with permission of the University Police, they'll test the car on the streets of the campus.

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Fourteen Texas A&M University students who have been preparing energy-efficient vehicle for competition in August have run into a minor snag and one major one money.

Mike Love, a senior mechanical engineering major, said the team received only \$3,590 out of their budget of \$8,290. The Student Competition on Relevant Engineering (SCORE) committee, the national group sponsoring the contest, donated \$2,500 alone.

The rest of the donations, Love said, have come mostly from local merchants, who have donated parts, counts and cash. They've bent over backwards," Love said.

Love said the group is now going through the red tape necessary to get more money from different departments of the University. "We've contacted the Mechanical Engineering Department and the Texas Transportation Institute, among others, concerning additional funding. Whether or not they get it, Love said, is anybody's guess.

None of the students involved is getting paid for his work, Love said, and only one is receiving any class credit.

There are 46 other schools in North America entered in the contest, some with budgets of over \$100,000. Because of their comparatively small budget, the Texas A&M team had to start with a Honda 350 cc. They bought for \$150 from a San Antonio yard. The car, not available in

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