

Car hotline helps stop lemon sales

By NANCY ANDERSEN
City Staff

Buying a used car, often considered the lemon of the automobile world, is becoming safer due to the Department of Transportation's auto safety hotline.

The hotline's purpose is to supply recall information about any motor vehicle sold in the United States. If a car was recalled for a safety defect, the information is entered into a computer. Operators staff the hotline from 6:45 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. and given the vehicle's make, model and year, they can immediately give any defect or recall information to potential buyers.

This information includes automobiles, trucks and motorcycles; domestic and foreign vehicles, and accessories like tires.

Also, the hotline staff welcomes consumer calls to report any safety-related problem with a vehicle. A form will be sent to the complainant which asks for the vehicle's make, model and year and the exact problem. This information is also fed into the computer.

The hotline began as an experiment in October 1975, with only four operators. It is now permanently funded and has 10-13 operators staffing it. Operator Deborah Mazzyck said the phones ring continuously, averaging about several hundred calls a day. After hours calls are answered by a tape recorder enabling callers to leave a message.

The hotline is toll-free to callers in the continental United States and the telephone number is 800-424-9393.

Flood pleads guilty, but says he's not

United Press International
WASHINGTON — Former Rep. Daniel Flood, D-Pa., still maintaining his innocence, but saying he is physically and mentally unable to defend himself, pleaded guilty Tuesday to a misdemeanor conspiracy count to avoid a bribery retrial.

U.S. District Judge Oliver Gasch promptly let the 76-year-old Flood off without a jail term, bringing to an end the 17-month-old case.

As part of a plea bargaining agreement reached last Friday, prosecutors filed a new misdemeanor charge alleging Flood violated federal campaign laws in taking payoffs from five persons, and dropped an 11-count conspiracy, bribery, and perjury indictment.

Begging the judge not to impose a

jail term, defense lawyer Axel Kleiboemer told the court: "He is an old man, ravaged by the effects of his age. He is used up, your honor."

Kleiboemer said Flood, once the powerful chairman of a House appropriations subcommittee, spent more than \$150,000 in the first year of his defense and is now deeply in debt.

"Enough is enough. Let him go in peace, and don't subject him to any further indignity," Kleiboemer said. The judge imposed no fine.

Flood, who has been hospitalized repeatedly since his first trial ended in a hung jury, appeared shaky and was allowed to sit while the sentence was imposed. But before entering his plea, he told the judge in a brief statement, "I am not guilty of each

and every element of the crime made by the government. I have decided to plead guilty because of consultation with my attorneys that I might be convicted of some of the charges in a hearing room, Flood said, with all my heart that I have not committed any criminal offense.

Kleiboemer, stressing Flood's declining condition, said the congressman's life expectancy is four to eight years. He had been subject to great stress and the lengthy prosecution forced him to resign Jan. 15, 1979, from his congressional seat for health reasons.

Life term given to rapist

United Press International
HOUSTON — A man has been sentenced to life in prison in the repeated rape of a 16-year-old girl who was beaten, dumped from a car naked, maced and shot in the knee before her attackers fled.

Steven Arlie Creech, 22, was the second man given a life sentence in the rape Oct. 9. Gary Dean Reno, 28, who lived with Creech, was convicted and sentenced earlier.

Prosecutors said Creech and Reno abducted the girl from a sidewalk, pulled her into the car, raped her repeatedly, beat her, dumped her in a roadside ditch, sprayed her with chemical mace and shot her in the knee.

Creech and Reno also are charged in the Sept. 19 rape of a 19-year-old woman on her honeymoon in Galveston. Police charge the two broke into a hotel room, tied up the husband and raped his wife in his presence.

The two also are charged with attempted murder of a police officer they shot while he pursued them after the Oct. 9 rape.

U.S. urged to tap lands for energy

United Press International
WEATHERFORD — The United States must develop energy potential on federally owned lands if it is to meet its future energy needs, Railroad Commission Chairman John Poerner said Tuesday.

Poerner said oil and gas will continue to provide more than half of the world's energy through the end of this century, but he said the nation must mount an extensive effort at conservation and development of domestic energy resources.

He renewed his recommendation for development of a "bullet train" connecting San Antonio, Houston and Dallas-Fort Worth and for deregulation of oil and gas prices to encourage exploration.

"We must make better use of federal lands," Poerner said in a speech prepared for a luncheon of the Rotary Club.

"About half of all known remaining energy reserves in this nation are on federal land, yet fully 60 percent of the on-land federal estate has been formally closed or severely restricted to exploration and development for ecological reasons."

Poerner said the federal lands should be "leased, explored, drilled and produced, but in harmony with other ecologically desirable uses."

The chairman of the agency which regulates oil and gas production in Texas said the most valuable contribution the federal government could make to the energy problem would be to encourage a healthy climate in which the free market system could operate.

Search for Texas family continuing

United Press International
TAOS, N.M. — Civil Air Patrol search planes Tuesday backtracked over areas searched previously for a missing plane carrying five members of a Texas family.

"We're going over the area again because the changing winds we've had might have moved snow and uncovered the aircraft, if it is up there somewhere," said Lt. Steve Satchell of the CAP.

The plane, piloted by Dr. Robert Russell of the Dallas suburb of Mesquite, disappeared Thursday on a flight from Amarillo to Durango, Colo. On board were Russell's wife, Bertha, two sons, Brian and Chris, and a daughter, Gina.

Search operations were interrupted Monday with the crash of one of the CAP search planes. The plane, a single-engine T-34 trainer, crashed at the 12,200 foot level on the side of 13,161-foot Wheeler Peak, New Mexico's highest mountain. Both men on board survived the crash and were airlifted to an Albuquerque hospital.

The missing plane was last spotted on radar in the Taos-Red River area. The plane's flight path would have taken it across New Mexico's highest mountain range, which had been hit by a series of snow storms during the past two weeks.

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