

Local

Barrels lifesavers on roads

By SUE McNEILL
Battalion Reporter

Four Texas A&M University professors have designed a low-cost crash cushion for highway construction sites that could save the lives of motorists.

The cushion was designed by civil engineering professors Drs. Hayes E. Ross, Eugene L. Marquis, Teddy J. Hirsch and Don L. Ivey, assistant director of TTI, which is a part of the Texas A&M University System.

The cushion design project was sponsored by the Texas State Department of Highways and Transportation in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration.

The cushion is made of sand-filled steel barrels that are connected by guardrails. It was designed for attachment to the end of a concrete wall which is used to block off highway construction sites from the rest

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of the highway. The open end of the concrete wall is a hazardous area, and an oncoming car's impact on the end of this wall would be lessened by the cushion.

When the cushion was tested, two large cars (about 4,500 pounds) and two small cars (about 2,200 pounds) travelling at 50 mph were crashed into a 15-barrel-cushion.

Ross said the deceleration forces measured after the cars' impact on the cushion were well below values at which human injuries occur. Ross said that although no large trucks or trailers were tested with the cushion, other researchers have found that designing a cushion for such vehicles was impractical, because trucks are too heavy and rapid deceleration of trailers causes them to jackknife.

Ross said he and the other designers have not decided yet whether or not to apply for a patent on the design since the research was state funded and the four professors could not expect any profits from the patent. Ross said he would like to see the cushion marketed through a private contractor who would build, sell and maintain it.

A company already sells a similar cushion which is much more costly than the TTI cushion. Such cushions are required as a safety precaution for highway construction. Private contractors, hired by the state to work on highways, now must pay for the higher-priced cushion.

Ross said the cushion he helped design is less costly because it is made of more easily accessible materials than the other cushion.

Ross said the cushion has a potential for widespread use in Texas and in the rest of the United States.

What's Up

TUESDAY

- MSC OPAS:** Pianist Bella Davidovich will perform at 8 p.m. in Rudder Auditorium.
- MANAGEMENT SOCIETY:** Will meet at 7 p.m. in 504 Rudder.
- OFF-CAMPUS AGGIES:** Will meet at 6:30 p.m. in 167 G. Rollie White.
- CHRISTMAS TREE PRESALE:** Lambda Sigma will take orders for Christmas trees from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the MSC Main Hall.
- BONFIRE BLOWOUT:** The Bonfire Committee will sponsor a dance at 8 p.m. at the Lakeview Club.
- MSC GREAT ISSUES:** Steve Baer will speak on "Solar Energy Alternatives for the Eighties" at 12:30 p.m. in Rudder Forum.
- CATHOLIC STUDENT ASSOCIATION:** Will meet for Bible study at 9 p.m. in Corps Area Lounge E and for a prayer service at 10 p.m. at St. Mary's Church.
- ASSOCIATION OF BIOENGINEERS:** Will meet at 7:30 p.m. in 302 Rudder.
- STUDENT DIETETIC ASSOCIATION:** Will meet at 6:30 p.m. in 126 Kleberg.
- TEXAS A&M TRAP & SKEET CLUB:** Will meet at 7 p.m. in 109 Military Sciences.
- PHI THETA KAPPA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION:** Will meet at 7 p.m. in 137 MSC.
- UNITED CAMPUS MINISTRIES:** Will have a free concert at 8 p.m. in 206 Rudder.
- SOUTH LOUISIANA HOMETOWN CLUB:** Will meet at 7 p.m. in 140A MSC.
- EL PASO HOMETOWN CLUB:** Will meet at 8 p.m. in 119B Zachry. Aggeland pictures will be taken at 7:45 p.m. in the Zachry lobby.
- PRE-MED/PRE-DENT SOCIETY:** Will meet at 7:30 p.m. in 200 Harrington.
- MARINE RESEARCH MANAGEMENT LECTURE:** John E. Flipse, Texas A&M Coastal and Ocean Engineering Program, will speak on "Marine Research in the Private Sector — Deepsea Mining," at 4 p.m. in 204C Sterling C. Evans Library.
- AMERICAN HUMANICS STUDENT ASSOCIATION:** Will have a seminar on "Starting Your Future" at 6 p.m. in 302 Rudder.
- MSC AGGIE CINEMA:** Will meet at 7:30 p.m. in 301 Rudder.

WEDNESDAY

- STUDENT DIETETIC ASSOCIATION:** Aggeland pictures will be taken at 7:15 p.m. in the MSC Main Lounge.

- MSC BASEMENT COMMITTEE:** Tickets for The Skunks performance will be on sale through Friday in the MSC Box Office.
- CHRISTMAS TREE PRESALE:** Lambda Sigma will be taking orders for Christmas trees from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the MSC Main Hall.
- CATHOLIC STUDENT ASSOCIATION:** The Newman Club will meet at 7:30 p.m. at St. Mary's Student Center.
- CO-OP STUDENT ASSOCIATION:** Will have an organizational meeting at 8 p.m. in 301 Rudder.
- TEXAS STUDENT EDUCATION ASSOCIATION:** Aggeland pictures will be made at 7 p.m. in the MSC Main Lounge.
- HILLEL CLUB:** Will meet at 8 p.m. at the Jewish Student Center. Aggeland pictures will be taken at 9:30 p.m. in the MSC Main Lounge.
- UNITED CAMPUS MINISTRIES:** Will meet for dinner at 6:15 p.m. at the A&M Presbyterian Church.
- MSC ARTS COMMITTEE:** Entries for the Juried Student Art and Crafts Competition will be accepted from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. in the MSC Craft Shop through today.
- "CRIES AND WHISPERS":** The film explores the relationships between four women — three sisters, one of whom is dying of cancer, and their devoutly loyal housekeeper. Their facades are stripped away revealing their personal agonies and common fears. The feature will be shown at 7:30 p.m. in Rudder Theater.

RHA to discuss parking

Paul Bettencourt, member of the Texas A&M University Traffic Panel, will discuss the parking situation on campus at the Residence Hall Association meeting tonight at 7:00 in 204 Harrington.

Also to be discussed is the decision to require fifth-year seniors and graduate students to live off-campus to provide more room for freshmen. The decision brought on debate among RHA delegates when announced at the last meeting.

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