

# idea corner

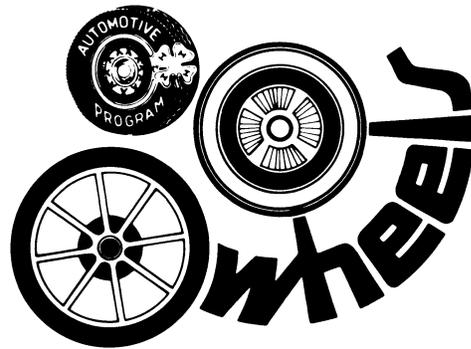
## Wheels

Hot wheels, neat wheels, cheap wheels . . . for a young person, a set of "wheels" symbolizes mobility and independence. But when a physician in western Nebraska expressed concern about the number of teens involved in automobile accidents, one response was an Extension-sponsored "Wheels Fair."

The half-day Wheels Fair attracted over 200 driver-education age youth from 6 high schools in Scotts Bluff County, Nebraska. The students were divided into small groups and rotated through 5 different 30-minute programs and demonstrations.

A local motorcycle dealer emphasized the importance of wearing a protective helmet and proper clothing, and urged teens to enroll in a motorcycle safety course. A demonstration of the "Jaws of Life" power rescue equipment coupled with a drinking and driving session created a scenario in which few teens wanted to be a participant.

The used-car judging contest challenged students to determine the best buy among the four used cars on display. Then, a salesman explained what to look for when making the first purchase. In the financing and insurance session, students were surprised at the expense involved in financing and insuring their "dream car." Maybe Dad's old Pontiac might not be so bad after all!



A multidisciplinary committee of 4-H, CRD, engineering, and communication specialists developed the automotive safety program based on an interest survey sent to students and high school instructors. The Youth and Safety Committee of the local Rotary Club provided funds to support the Wheels program and volunteers from the business and medical community implemented the program.

The Wheels Fair received a positive response from school administrators as well as students. Results from a random survey, taken two weeks later, indicated the program objectives had been met. Students reported they felt more confident in selecting a car or motorcycle. Credit-worthiness became a more realistic goal. Of the respondents, 78% indicated that as a result of the information received, they wouldn't drink and then drive.

A vital need to provide youth with information concerning automotive



*Exercise during used-car judging contest.*

safety exists. Through the Wheels Fair, Extension offered a fun, educational approach to encouraging automotive safety and hopefully, decreasing mishaps involving teens behind the wheel.

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