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GM Prexy Discusses Traffic Safety Problems

Efforts to increase traffic safety require a balanced approach that puts proper emphasis on the driver and the highway as well as on the car, was pointed out recently by John F. Gordon, Bloomfield Hills resident and president of General Motors, in addressing the annual National Safety Congress.

Referring to statements that cars could be made virtually foolproof and crash-proof, Gordon declared:

"This thesis is, of course, wholly unrealistic. It also is a serious threat to a balanced approach to traffic safety."

The General Motors president explained that an automobile must be designed so that people will want to buy and use it.

"We can only design into it the greatest degree of safety that is consistent with other essential functional characteristics," he said. "Beyond that, we must depend on intelligent use."

GORDON AGREED that the design and performance characteristics of the automobile were an important factor in the safety problem. He said that auto manufacturers have worked diligently and productively to make good driving easier and to provide increased crash injury protection. This progress will continue," he said. "New designs and devices will be adopted as rapidly as our research, development and test work assures us that they are practicable and desirable.

"Progress will continue, that is, if we can continue to adhere to the approach that has produced the gains of the past. Every year's new model cars will be better in other respects, but these improvements are in response to forces at work in our free competitive economy—not in response to regulatory forces."

GORDON CALLED attention to the recent influx into the traffic safety field of self-styled experts with radical and ill-considered proposals.

The general thesis of these amateur engineers is that cars could be made virtually foolproof and crash-proof, that this is the only

practical route to greater safety and that federal regulation of vehicle design is needed.

"The suggestion that we abandon hope of teaching drivers to avoid traffic accidents and concentrate on designing cars that will make collisions harmless is a perplexing combination of defeatism and wishful thinking," Gordon asserted.

"There certainly is a proper and productive role for government in safety promotion, Gordon pointed out.

"However, the imposition of arbitrary controls as a substitute for

Conroy Taking Basic At Fort Knox, Ky.

Private John L. Conroy, son of Mr. and Mrs. John L. Conroy, 1018 Pilgrim, Birmingham, has been assigned to Co. B of the 5th Training Regiment's 17th Battalion at Fort Knox, Ky., for eight weeks basic training.

During this two-month period with 6th Training Regiment, a strongly motivated voluntary action by competent engineers in industry might well inhibit progress."

major command of the US Army Training Center, Armor, he will be taught the basic skills of an infantryman. Included in his training schedule are physical training, first aid, use of small arms weapons and dismantled drill.

Upon successfully completing the two months of training, he will be assigned elsewhere for eight weeks of advanced individual training in a particular skill needed by the United States Army.

Conroy is a 1956 graduate of University of Detroit High School.

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Oakland Joins Five Counties To Aid CD

Fourteen conferees from six southwestern Michigan counties, including Oakland, have decided to establish a technical advisory committee to coordinate a "more sensible" civil defense operation in the Detroit metropolitan area.

The committee will be composed of six county civil defense directors to assist the Inter-County Supervisors Committee in the proposed coordination.

The group met Oct. 27 and included CD directors from Wayne, Oakland, Macomb, St. Clair, Washtenaw and Monroe counties, as well as from Oakland. Also present were representatives of the Boards of Supervisors of each county.

DELOS HAMLIN, head of the Oakland County Board, chaired the meeting.

Some of the conferees said the state has "fallen down" in providing a strong CD office and that the state legislature changed the law last June so that communities of more than 10,000 population are no longer required to have their own CD agencies.

The conferees attributed the change in law to a probable "error" in language.

In other findings, they said that many local CD plans are aimed at getting matching federal funds rather than survival of people and claimed that confusion is dominant at all levels of government on CD.

THE CONFEREES felt that the big nuclear bombs would cross county and community boundaries in terms of devastation, should war come.

The Inter-County committee wants to coordinate plans of the six counties and to support programs and state and federal legislation "to improve CD."

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