

AAA AUTO CLUB CAMPAIGN**Firms Urged to Give Car-Pool Data**

By JACK COX

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A well-organized effort to persuade large companies to take the initiative in getting their employees into car pools was launched Thursday in Denver.

The campaign, described as possibly the most advanced in the nation, is being coordinated by the Rocky Mountain AAA Auto Club, with help from Downtown Denver, Inc., and George Washington High School students who have devised a computerized system to team drivers with riders.

The plan encourages businesses to use their own computers to provide for each employe a list of the names and phone numbers of 10 co-workers who live within two miles of his home.

"We're not saying, 'This is your partner,'" explained Jim Bane, AAA managing director. "We're saying, 'Here's a list. The rest is up to you.'"

None Successful

Several car-pool ventures have been organized in the Denver area in the past few years — all without marked success. Unlike the new effort, they have asked the commuter to take the first step — often by paying a fee to obtain car-pool information.

"We're putting the burden on each individual corporation to do it for its

employees," noted Irwin Hoffman, a George Washington High School computer-math teacher who supervised the development of the program.

The first companies to use the high school techniques are Great Western Sugar Co. and the Air Force Accounting and Finance Center. "They came to us" about a month ago, after hearing about the plan through news reports, Hoffman said.

At the Air Force installation, 3800 York St., about half the 1,800 employes who were given lists have joined car pools. At Great Western, 1530 16th St., "only six employes didn't match up in a car pool," Hoffman said.

Companies Briefed

In the past month, officials of about 38 major Denver corporations have been briefed and given data cards. AAA staff members, Bane said, are contacting an additional five companies per day.

In addition, employes of the six inner-city hospitals, students and teachers at the east and west campuses of the Community College of Denver and the 7,200 people who work for Denver Public Schools are due to receive car-pool lists.

"General Rose (Hospital) gave us 700 cards yesterday," Hoffman said. Employers that don't have computers can use the Univac 1106 at the high school, he noted.

"Our biggest user so far is the City and County of Denver," Hoffman said. Mayor Bill McNichols, he said, has provided city funds for the forms on which the basic information is written.

Downtown Denver, Inc., is preparing to take the plan to its 300 member businesses, which employ approximately 65,000 people, spokesman Tim Campbell said.

Within the next month, organizers of the car-pool drive estimated, between 60,000 and 80,000 Denver commuters will have the computer printouts naming 10 potential car poolers.

Backers of the program are considering applying for federal funds to set up a regional coordinating office, "to take it

out of a high school that goes on summer vacation."

Bane said, however, that he believes private enterprise can pick up the tab. AAA now is willing to subsidize the program, he said.

The versatile, adaptable computer program that makes the car-pool effort promising was figured out by Mark Frank, 17, a senior in Hoffman's computer-mathematics class.

The program first was tested at the high school, then was made available to other Denver schools. The news media quickly found out about it, and word reached the Alan Voorhees Co. of Washington, D.C., a consulting firm hired by the Department of Transportation to assess the "state of the art" in car pooling across the country.

In four hectic evenings during Christmas vacation, Frank's program was redesigned to handle a small community instead of a school. Then he and Hoffman flew to Washington to outline its operation to the experts at Voorhees.

"They informed us that we were far ahead (of the rest of the country) in terms of getting a whole community mobilized for car pooling," Hoffman said.

"We know how to do it and what it takes. The rest of the country is still struggling with these problems."