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Driver training

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Although people have been writing for hundreds of years, they still need erasers on the ends of their pencils. Just as an eraser will eliminate pencil errors, driver education will help eliminate the mistakes drivers might make behind the wheel.

That is how Dr. John Urlaub, visiting lecturer at Montana State University, illustrated the need for driver education in the nation's schools. Dr. Urlaub, professor of safety education and driver training at the University of California, is directing his 14th safety education and driver training session at the MSU Summer Session. The three-week session, made up of two workshops for driver training instructors, is sponsored by the Montana Highway Patrol, the American Automobile Association and MSU. Alex B. Stephenson, supervisor, and Peter Gassch, safety director, of the Highway Patrol are assisting Dr. Urlaub.

Class members receive both classroom instruction and behind-the-wheel teaching experience. The course is taught according to a basic outline recommended for use in the high schools.

Psychophysical tests are made to indicate the driver's reaction time and his limitations including color vision, depth vision and night vision. These areas, which are included in the examination for a state driver's license are more thoroughly tested in the classroom so the driver will know his own limitations.

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Demonstrations are an integral part of the workshop. Reaction time and stopping distance of the car is demonstrated. A fact stressed is that distances in the demonstration are under a controlled situation in which the driver is aware he will have to stop suddenly. The reaction and stopping time would be much greater when he is not expecting to stop.

Driver education is being taught to approximately one and one-half million students in the nation's schools, Dr. Urlaub said. California law requires a course in driver training for high school graduation. Although the course is not required in Montana, 32 high schools offer driver education.

Dr. Urlaub believes one of the functions of education is "the preservation of health and safety." This can be accomplished partially through driver education. "Thirty hours in the classroom and six hours behind the wheel will not jeopardize the academic career of anyone and may save his life," he said.

Dr. Urlaub noted that 35 studies of trained and untrained drivers have shown a 50 per cent reduction in accidents among trained drivers.

A more immediate result of driver training to the individual is the reduction in insurance rates for the trained driver. Dr. Urlaub said many insurance companies offer from 10 to 20 per cent reductions in insurance rates to trained drivers. This can amount to approximately a $200 saving for drivers between the ages of 16 and 24, Dr. Urlaub said.
CUTLINES:

Cut A:
DETONATOR—Warren Gamas of Glasgow and Philip Stanley of St. Ignatius attach a detonator to the rear bumper of a car. The device will be used to signal the demonstration driver to stop and at the same time will leave a chalk mark on the street. It will leave another chalk mark when the driver applies the car's brakes. The marks will be used in measuring the driver's reaction time and the stopping distance of a car traveling at given speeds.

Cut B:
MEASURING—One group of students stands at the point where the signal to stop was given, another near the point where the car's brakes were applied. The car had been traveling about 40 miles per hour. The men in the class will present similar demonstrations to students in driver training classes in high schools where they teach.

Cut C:
DIRECTOR—Dr. John Urlaub has taught driver training workshops at Montana State University for 14 Summer Sessions. Among his classroom displays are photographs of highway accidents which indicate a need for driver education. Dr. Urlaub noted the greatest single killer of persons less than 35 years of age is the automobile.