

ADVERTISING FEATURE

WHEELS

Owner has right to see and take parts that have been replaced on vehicle

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CAR CARE COUNCIL

Q. My car is seven years old. I'm trying to decide if I should keep my car or get a new one. What should I do?

A. This is a tough decision that my customers face every day. With the price of new cars soaring, if you are satisfied with your car, it's a good idea to find out just what kind of condition it's in.

There are comprehensive vehicle inspection programs throughout the country, but if you can't locate one in your area, talk to your regular technician. Ask for a thorough inspection of your vehicle.

They should check your brake condition (all four wheels), inspect your steering and suspension components front and

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rear, an electrical system test, visual inspection under the hood, hoses, belts, fluid levels and condition, inspect the undercarriage — exhaust performance, computer check for trouble codes.

This evaluation should take at least two to three hours. When finished, they should have enough time to discuss the outcome of the inspection.

Armed with this information, you can make an educated decision about whether to keep your car or purchase a new one.

Q. Do I have the right to ask what brand of parts a repair shop used on my car?

A. When you take your vehicle to a repair shop, you should not only get an itemized bill with part number and brand name, but it should have a separate line which should include labour for everything that was performed on your vehicle.

Find a shop that gives you a detailed invoice of what was performed and what exact parts were replaced.

You should be offered to see, or take your old parts if you want to. It's also great if the shop can document if there is anything else your vehicle may need in the future. That way you can budget ahead.

Q. When should I service my cooling system?

A. At my shop we recommend the cooling system be serviced every two years or 24,000 miles. (Car manufacturers say three years or 36,000 miles)

There are additives in antifreeze that provide alkaline to help neutralize internal corrosion before it begins. We find that after two years, the antifreeze starts to lose the corrosion

resistance.

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This is also a great time for a visual inspection of your belts and hoses.

Q. The yellow ABS (anti-lock brake system) light comes on for my brakes. Does that mean I don't have any brakes?

A. When the yellow ABS light comes on that means something for the ABS is not functioning properly, therefore your ABS will not function.

The ABS is designed to work in panic stops. It keeps the wheels from locking up and skidding.

Your regular brakes will function the way they were designed to work from the factory. ABS is, however, a very important safety feature and I would recommend you have the system checked by your shop as soon as you can.

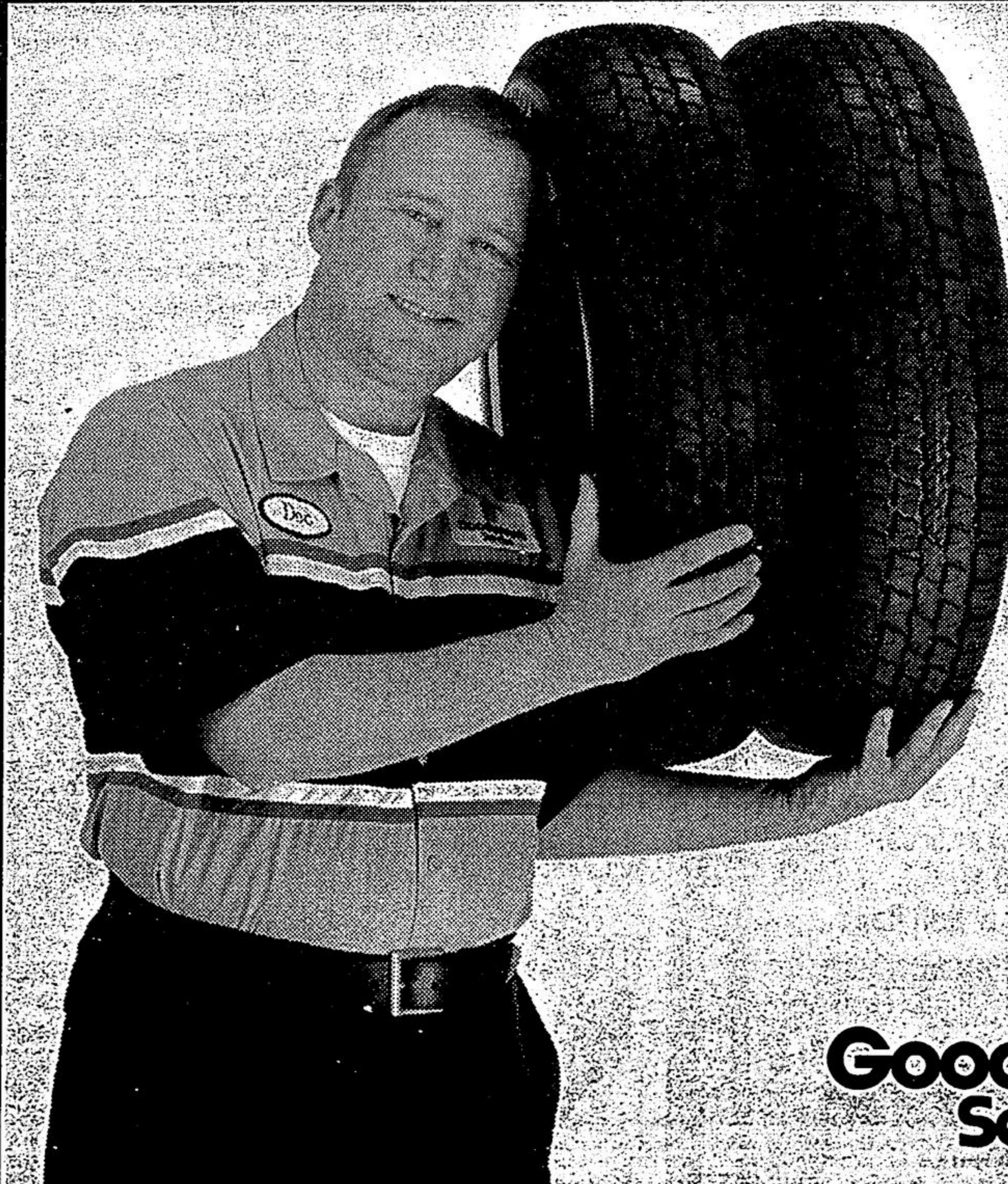
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