



Finding Aid for

FORD LISTENS RECORDS, 1970-1976

Accession 1835

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OVERVIEW

REPOSITORY: Benson Ford Research Center
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20900 Oakwood Blvd
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ACCESSION NUMBER: 1835

CREATOR: Ford Motor Company. Marketing Department.

TITLE: Ford Listens records

INCLUSIVE DATES: 1970-1976

BULK DATES: 1971-1973

QUANTITY: 4.4 cubic ft. and 12 card files

LANGUAGE: The materials are in English.

ABSTRACT: Program established by Ford Motor Company in the 1970s to receive and respond to customer inquiries about the company's products and services. Records consist of original research sheets and material used by Ford Listens staff to answer the questions including press releases, clippings, photographs, publications, and manuals.

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

ACCESS RESTRICTIONS: The records are open for research.

COPYRIGHT: Copyright has been transferred to The Henry Ford by the donor. Copyright for some items in the collection may still be held by their respective creator(s).

ACQUISITION: Donated by the Ford Motor Company Archives, 2004.

PREFERRED CITATION: Item, folder, box, accession 1835, Ford Listens records, Benson Ford Research Center, The Henry Ford

PROCESSING INFORMATION: Collection processed by staff of The Henry Ford, circa 2004.

DESCRIPTION INFORMATION: Original collection inventory list prepared by staff of The Henry Ford in 2005.

Finding aid written by Carol Whittaker, April 2005, and published in MM YYYY.

Finding aid prepared using Describing Archives: A Content Standard (DACs) and local guidelines.

BIOGRAPHICAL/HISTORICAL NOTE

The Ford Listens program was launched in November 1970 after ten months of preliminary investigation and testing of print and television advertising. The key goal of the program was to establish a direct and honest dialogue with consumers by committing to help improve the problem areas that concerned people at the time. The program was run by the Marketing Department of Ford Motor Company.

The "Listens" program had a staff of writers who researched the customer questions and replied to their letters. The staff worked closely with the Ford Customer Service Division and other company branches in handling comments and questions about Ford products. The goal of the division was to provide as complete and courteous a response as possible to everyone who wrote.

According to a 1972 survey of requests received to that point, product and service complaints accounted for an average of 33% of letters; 10% offered suggestions for product improvement, and 36% requested information about cars, the company, the "listens" program, and other things of personal interest. Many letters received were requests for the booklet "Car Buying Made Easier," which was published by the company.

The slogan for the program was "Ford...has a better idea (we listen better)."

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The Ford Listens records are organized into three series.

The **Administrative Series**, 1970-1972 (0.2 cubic ft.), includes a collection of press releases, newsletters about the program and information about the comment coding system used to analyze the types of questions being received.

The **Subject Files series**, 1970-1976 (0.2 cubic ft.), is arranged alphabetically according to subjects assigned by original Ford Listens staff. It appears that the material was originally divided into two broad subject categories, General and Vehicle, and then arranged alphabetically by narrower subjects. The broad categories have been combined in reprocessing to provide a larger alphabetically arranged collection. Folders contain Research Sheets and in most cases the sources of information for which the answer to the question was found. The Research Sheet includes the original question and its answer along with the source of the answer, researcher, file subject, and any cross-references. Source material mainly consists of news articles, press releases, and portions of owner's manuals. The folders may also contain yellow sheets, which appear to be cross-references or blue sheets, which seem to indicate when material is outdated.

The **Card File Index series**, circa 1970s (12 card files), includes twelve boxes of index cards arranged alphabetically by subject term. It is assumed that the index card file was used by Ford Listens staff to help them determine if a question had been asked before and to direct the staff to resources to help answer the question. An uncontrolled subject term is located in the upper left

corner. The upper right corner contains the corresponding controlled subject term assigned by Ford Listens staff that would be used to locate the documentation on that subject. There are 4 different index card colors. The white cards and blue cards contain the original questions directed to the Ford Listens program. The yellow and green cards contain article titles, sometimes with a brief abstract.

SUBJECT TERMS

Names, Personal and Corporate

Ford, Henry, 1917-1987

Iacocca, Lee A., 1924-

Nader, Ralph, 1934-

Ford Motor Company. Marketing Department.

Ford Motor Company. Customer Service Division

Ford Motor Company--Public relations.

Subjects

Automobile industry and trade

Advertising

Automobiles--Safety measures

Automobiles--Seat belts

Edsel automobile

Ford automobile

Lincoln automobile

Marketing

Mercury automobile

Pinto automobile

Pollution

Safety.

Sales promotion

Genre and Form

Press releases

Clippings

Photographs

Publications

Vertical files

CONTAINER LIST

Box no. **Description**

ADMINISTRATIVE

Box 1

Commenting Coding System Summary Reports, 1972
Newsletters, 1970-1972
Press Release, Advertisements and News Clippings, 1971-1972

SUBJECT FILES, 1970-1976

Accessories
Advertising (2 folders)
Air Conditioning

Box 2

Antiques
Assembly Line
Automatic Transmissions
Basic Engines
Battery: Hold Down
Brake System
Bronco
Bumpers
Capri
Car Theft
Carburetors and Air Cleaners
Careers
Certification
Chrysler
Comet
Comparative Data
Complete Vehicle
Consumerism
Continental Mark IV
Convertible Tops
Cortina
Cougar
Courier
Customer Service Division

Box 3

Dealer Service (2 folders)
Disc
Distribution
Door, Deck Lid, Tailgate Mounting
Driveline System

Edsel, The
Electrical System
Elite
Emission Control
Employees
Energy
Engine
 Coolings
 Ignition
 Lubrication
 Maintenance

Box 4

 Miscellaneous
 Mounting
 Starter
 System
 Types
Exhaust System
Exterior
 Ornamentation
 Trim
Facilities
Fair Lane Estate
Falcon
Fixed Glass
Ford Export Corporation
Ford, General
Ford International
Ford Listens – Ads
Ford of Canada
Ford of Europe
Ford Services
Frame
Front End
Fuel
 Economy
 Systems

Box 5

Future
 Materials
 Plans
General Motors
Handles, Locks & Mechanisms
Heater, Defroster

Heavy Trucks
History
Hydraulic Power Supply
Iacocca, L .A.
Imports
 Fiats
 Mazda
 Toyota
 Volkswagen
 Volvo
Insurance
Instrument Panel
Interior – Ornamentation and Console
LTD
Labor Relations
Legal
Legislation
Lemons
Limousines
Lincoln Continental
Lincoln-Mercury
Lubrication
Maintenance
Manual Transmission

Box 6

Mass Transit
Maverick
Measurements
Mercury
Mirrors
Miscellaneous (2 folders)
Montego
Motorcraft
Motorcycles
Nader, Ralph
Paint
Pick Ups – Light Trucks
Pinto (2 folders)
Parts
Performance/Economy
Philco

Box 7

Pollution
 IIEC (Inter-Industry Emission Control)

- Alternative Power Sources
- California
- Catalysts
- Cost
- Electric Car
- Ford Programs
- Fuel
- General
- General Motors, Chrysler
- Government Regulation (2 folders)
- Industry

Box 8

- Lear
- Noise
- PROCO (Programmed Combustion)
- Recycling
- Steam Engine
- Stirling Engine
- Turbine Engine
- Wankel Engine
- Pricing
- Procurement
- Promotional Material
- Publications – Educational Material

Box 9

- Quality
- Radio
- Ranchero
- Recalls
- Recreational Vehicles
- Riverfront Development
- Safety
 - Accidents
 - Air Bags
 - Bumpers
 - Costs
 - Driving
 - Educational Material
 - ESV (Experimental Safety Vehicle)
 - General
 - Government Regulations

Box 10

- Highways

- History
- Safety Belts
- Safety Devices
- Test Programs
- Tot Guard
- Sales (2 folders)
- Shipping
- Social Responsibility
- Stocks and Stock Holders
- Styling
- Tanks, Planes and Taxicabs
- Torino
- Used Cars

Box 11

- Vans
- Vehicles
 - Body Lamp
 - Body Maintenance
 - Body Structure
 - Body System (see Body Structure)
 - Climate Control (see Engine Cooling)
 - Clutch System
 - Distributor
 - Drum Brakes
 - Fuel Tank – Lines
 - Gauges – Warning Devices
 - Horns
 - Interior Trim
 - Instrument Cluster & Panel Lighting
 - Jacks
 - Moveable Glass
 - Off Highway Parts
 - Skid Control

CARD FILE INDEX, CIRCA 1970s

Box 12

- A-Bro

Box 13

- Bu-Conn

Box 14

- Coo-Emission Control

Box 15
Emission Devices-Fru

Box 16
Fuel-Ind

Box 17
Ine-Meas

Box 18
Mech-Nyl

Box 19
O-Pow

Box 20
Pr-Sae

Box 21
Saf-Sti

Box 22
Sto-Toy

Box 23
Tra-Z