

## Technology Forecast

### *Service Procedures Are Changing*

Automatic transmission technicians will soon be making room for laptop computers in their toolboxes. Because of their greater computing power, laptops help diagnose problems more accurately than a traditional scan tool.

Laptop computers can also be connected to the Internet. This resource quickly provides easy access to information. Technicians can get the latest diagnostic and repair data, as well as any software updates needed for the vehicle computer. By entering the vehicle identification number, technicians will be alerted to the latest technical service bulletins (TSBs).

Laptops will be even more helpful as newer and smaller designs are developed. It may be possible for these systems to be worn on the technician's belt. Information would be shown on a display screen that would be a part of the technician's safety glasses.

The greater use of synthetic automatic transmission fluid could also change service procedures. Synthetic fluid may be expensive, but it can handle the high stress loads put on the transmission. Synthetic fluid would allow automakers to switch to sealed fluid assemblies. The absence of a dipstick would prevent dirt and water from getting into the fluid. Vehicle owners would not be able to add the wrong fluid by mistake. Such a design could reduce, or even eliminate, the need for periodic transmission service.

#### **Action Activity**

Interview one or more experienced technicians. Ask how computers and other equipment have changed how they service vehicles. What information is available using computers and software? What will a future technician need to know to be able to use the latest data and TSBs?