

The dirty air in your car

THE AIR you breathe while walking along a highway could well be cleaner than that in your air-conditioned car, said a leading expert in the field yesterday.

The president of the US Indoor Air Quality Association, Mr Robert Baker, said: "It is established that indoor spaces are more contaminated than the outdoors, simply because indoor space does not naturally clean itself."

According to studies, drivers and passengers face a lack of ventilation and pollution entering the cabin via open doors or windows. There are also contaminants emitted inside the cabin – from an unclean air conditioning system, air fresheners, adhesives or even just having too many things in the car.

Long-term exposure could lead to health problems such as nausea, dizziness, eye and skin irritation, heart attacks, asthma, cancer and lung problems.

To help create awareness about the air quality in car cabins, Global Air Filtration Technologies, together with ComfortDelGro Engineering and the Singapore Environment Council, have teamed up to create a website. It will offer a free assessment for car owners and offer them tips. Log on to www.healthycarcabin.org.sg

— DAWN QUEK

The R&D report card

Number of private researchers went up

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SINGAPORE'S bio-medical initiative is driving the demand for researchers, especially in the private sector, according to the National Survey on R&D 2004, which was released yesterday.

The report noted that across all educational qualifications, the number of researchers in the private sector has increased 17.8 per cent to 12,457 last year.

Meanwhile, the number of degree level researchers employed in the sector has increased 19 per cent to 10,269 in 2004.

In particular, the number of PhD researchers employed in the private sector jumped

21.6 per cent to 709. They make up 5.7 per cent of 12,457 private researchers.

PhD researchers' headcount for the public and Government sectors showed marginal changes while the Public Research Institutes sector reported a 8.1 per cent increase in researchers.

"Many more young Singaporeans are now choosing R&D careers, responding to the national effort to develop new research- and innovation-intensive industry sectors such as the bio-medical sciences," said Agency for Science, Technology and Research's managing director Mr Boon Swan Foo.

Indeed, full-time PhD students increased 13 per cent from 2,204 in 2003 to 2,490 last year.

Overall, gross domestic expenditure on R&D increased 18.6 per cent to \$4,062 million

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last year. With gross domestic expenditure at 2.25 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product, Singapore's spending is approaching that of moderately high R&D intensive economies such as Belgium, Denmark, and Switzerland.

The growth in gross domestic expenditure was led by private sector expenditure on R&D, which increased 24.4 per cent to \$2,590 million.

This means that the pri-

private sector's share of R&D expenditure has increased from 60.8 per cent in 2003 to 63.8 per cent last year.

Even so, reported government financing of private sector R&D has increased in dollar terms from \$154.5 million in 2003 to \$163 million last year.

Reported private sector financing of public sector R&D decreased marginally from \$52.7 million in 2003 to \$51.9 million in 2004.



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