PHOTOS BY JEFFREY R. ZWART

from the base 2500 lb in the future unless some costly exotic materials are used. As for impact safety, we don't have to worry about whether the engine is up front or in back, because Big Brother's standards apply equally to all designs.

Aerodynamics may not have been a high priority consideration in the original Fiero design. With a relatively low weight and small frontal area (by American standards), good EPA mileage figures were possible without going for the ultimate in low drag coefficient. The reported C_X is 0.377, which is not bad for such a short car, but not too strong an advertising point either. One obvious problem is the notchback rear window, which is almost a necessary evil in a mid-engine car. Although it allows easy engine access and ventilation, it really disturbs the upper airflow and increases drag while reducing potential downforce from any rear spoiler. The Fiero's other problem is the nose-up leading edge of the front bumper. This design allows a good ramp angle and radiator inlet, but it also rams a lot of air down under the nose. Not only does this usually increase drag, but it also generates a lot of lift, in spite of the bottom-breather radiator inlet. Reported front lift figures were about 120 lb at 100 mph, which can be significant when the static front weight is just over 1100 lb. It also appears that the opened headlight buckets were not as well researched in the wind tunnel as the Corvette's, as they raise the C_X to 0.417. Be that as it may, the pop-off plastic body panel concept means that better aerodynamics can be incorporated easily in the future.

The engine/driveline package doesn't provide much of a story this year. Basically it is GM's transverse 2.5-liter 4-cylinder sitting on a subframe just as it does in the X-car. The cast iron overhead valve engine still puts out an everyday 92 bhp, even →