

40 Years in the Future

By James R. Berry

IT'S 8 a.m., Tuesday, Nov. 18, 2008, and you are headed for a business appointment 300 mi. away. You slide into your sleek, two-passenger air-cushion car, press a sequence of buttons and the national traffic computer notes your destination, figures out the current traffic situation and signals your car to slide out of the garage. Hands free, you sit back and begin to read the morning paper—which is flashed on a flat TV screen over the car's dashboard. Tap-

ping a button changes the page.

The car accelerates to 150 mph in the city's suburbs, then hits 250 mph in less built-up areas, gliding over the smooth plastic road. You whizz past a string of cities, many of them covered by the new domes that keep them evenly climatized year round. Traffic is heavy, typically, but there's no need to worry. The traffic computer, which feeds and receives signals to and from all cars in transit between cities, keeps vehicles at least

VEHICULAR travel between the domed, evenly climatized cities of 2008 is controlled by

