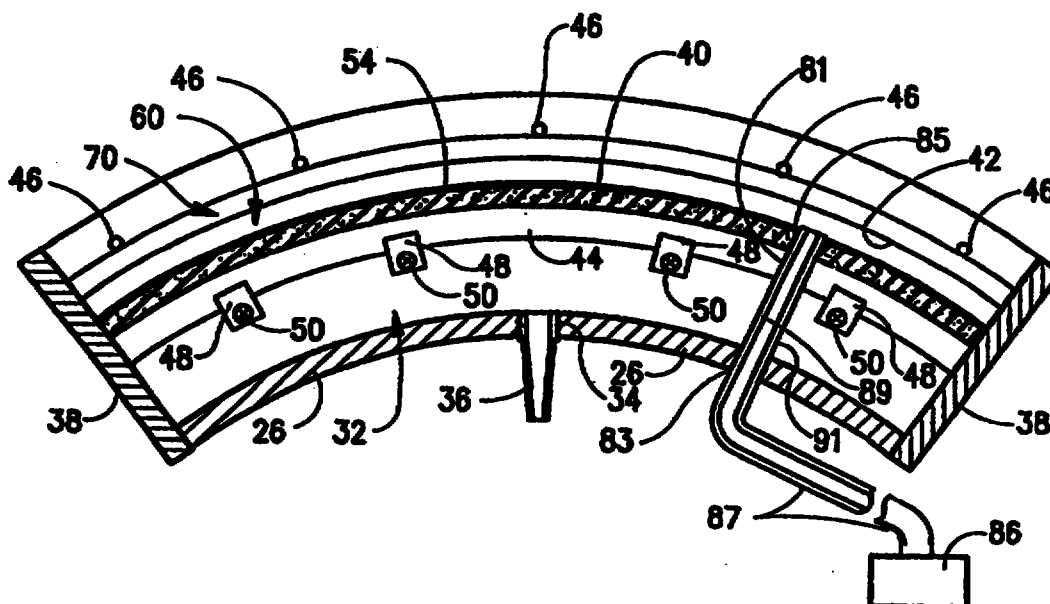




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(54) Title: TAPE TRANSPORT APPARATUS INCORPORATING POROUS AIR BEARING



(57) Abstract

An air bearing (20) for use on a tape transport apparatus is connectable to an air source (80) and supports a tape (14) on a cushion of air as the tape is transported. The air bearing comprises a housing (22) having an air inlet (34) adapted for connection to the air source and a bearing member (40) disposed on the housing and located so that the tape is transported across a bearing surface. The housing and the bearing member are configured to form a plenum chamber having an interior in fluid communication with the air inlet. At least a portion of the bearing member is fabricated out of a porous material allowing pressurized air in the plenum chamber to pass therethrough and out of the bearing surface to produce the cushion of air. A tape transport apparatus incorporating these features is also provided.