

The Energy Crunch...



Those were the days

Remember the good old days (not so long ago) when the price of gas was a mere 47 cents? The price and availability of gas continues to fluctuate and affects virtually everyone. Reg-

ular gas today at the Amoco station pictured above is 79 cents and who knows what it will be tomorrow.

Battalion staff photo

Americans hooked on oil?

State energy plan bill passes Senate

By KENNETH R. CLARK

United Press International

Gasoline-hungry Americans were given the message from every quarter Tuesday:

Sen. Pete Domenici, R-N.M., likened them to drug addicts, Deputy Secretary of State Warren Christopher told them to accept the reality of the energy crisis, and New York Gov. Hugh Carey said their teeth may be chattering next winter.

Ecuador boosted the price of oil to a record high, Iran cut production and the fuel famine deepened.

In Washington, the Senate approved a bill co-sponsored by Domenici and J. Bennett Johnston, D-La., that would permit the states to draft their own energy conservation plans.

Domenici said President Carter and the states should have the power to regulate fuel shortages because, "A collective entity like ourselves is paralyzed by parochial interests. We cannot act."

"Americans are hooked, hooked like crazy people on oil," he said, "like people hooked on drugs."

Christopher, reiterating the administration's insistence that the fuel shortage has not been engineered, told the Orange County World Affairs Council in Santa Ana, Calif., Americans must accept the reality of the energy crisis if it is to be solved.

"This is a choice that, in the end, has to be made by the American people," he said. "I know there are some who believe that the energy problem is not a real one. They believe it is artificially contrived by the oil companies. They are wrong."

Even as he spoke, an anonymous chain letter spread from Provi-

dence, R.I., across the nation. It called for a boycott of Shell Oil Co. products in protest of rising gasoline prices.

The letter, charging the fuel shortage "is contrived by the oil companies to drive up the cost of gasoline," urged each recipient to send copies to five friends.

"Mark your calendars," it urged. "July 1, 1979. To hell with Shell." Shell spokesman Norman Alstedter termed the letter "anonymous hate mail," but a Cumberland, R.I., Roman Catholic church voted to distribute it and a Los Angeles stockbroker said he was so angry after waiting in line for gas he passed out 30 copies to coworkers.

In New York, Gov. Hugh Carey worried more about a shortage of home heating oil than about gasoline prices and said he does not trust federal assurances the nation will have enough for winter.

"My concern is that as we approach the fall heating season, preparations are inadequate," he said. "We can't rely on verbal assurances that things will be all right. The fuels could be priced out of range."

The Ecuadorian price hike — a 32 percent jump, to \$26.80 a barrel — made the price tag the highest in the world.

Ecuador is one of the smallest of the OPEC nations and the move was not expected to have a heavy impact on the market, but oil industry sources warned it may be symbolic of what U.S. consumers eventually may face.

A more serious development came in Iran where officials announced the nation will reduce the amount of oil supplied to contract customers. Iranian production has fallen to about 4 million barrels a day from about 6 million barrels before the shah was deposed.

AAA says Texas gas supplies are tighter — prices still rising

WASHINGTON — The Senate voted to let states draw up their own energy plans to force Americans "hooked like crazy people on oil" — to conserve enough to fund mandatory federal programs. The Senate voted 77-13 Tuesday a bill under which the president would set conservation targets for states to meet. States failing to do so would have to accept what

the federal government required. The bill now goes to the House. Authored by Sens. Pete Domenici, R-N.M., and J. Bennett Johnston, D-La., the bill would put one major limitation on the federal plan: it must not include weekend closing of service stations. Congress rejected that Carter idea earlier this year.

Domenici said Congress should give the power to the states and Carter to solve energy shortages be-

cause, "A collective entity like ourselves is paralyzed by parochial interests we cannot act."

He said Congress should let the states and Carter draw a broadly based, flexible plan.

"Americans are hooked, hooked like crazy people on oil, like people hooked on drugs," he said.

Except for a proposal for controls on heating and airconditioning in non-residential buildings, Congress has turned down all major energy plans from the White House this year, including a standby gasoline rationing plan for the direct emergency such as war or severe cutoff of imported oil.

"Every proposal that comes before us is rejected," said Sen. Lowell Weicker, R-Conn.

U.S. warned crisis is real

HOUSTON — As many Texans learned while hunting for an open gas station, not only are prices rising but the fuel itself is becoming scarce.

In its 5th weekly "fuel gauge report" based on a survey of 436 service stations, the American Automobile Association said Tuesday the availability of gasoline declined this week compared to last — despite the beginning of June allocations.

Night and Sunday availability of gasoline in Texas' largest cities is nearing an AAA spokesman said. Twenty-one percent of the stations surveyed will be closed on Sunday, up from 10 percent on Saturday.

Stations closed by 6 p.m. on Sunday increased from 41 percent last week to 45 percent this week, the number closed by 8 p.m. on Sunday increased from 63 percent last week to 64 percent.

Stations open 24 hours daily decreased from 6 percent to 4 percent this week.

Meanwhile, prices continued to rise with AAA calculating current

average prices at: full-serve regular, 79.5 cents per gallon (78.6 cents last week); unleaded 83.4 cents (82.2 last week) and premium 85.4 (84.5).

The organization reported self-serve prices averaging: regular 76.7 cents per gallon (75.7 cents last week); unleaded 81.0 cents (79.7 last week) and premium 82.6 (81.4).

Diesel prices rose an average of 2 cents a gallon, from 78.7 to 80.7 cents a gallon, in Texas last week, AAA said.

In Houston AAA said the number of stations closed nights and all day Sunday increased "dramatically," with 78 percent closed after 8 p.m. weekdays, 75 percent after 6 p.m. Saturdays and 88 percent on Sundays.

The corresponding figures for the week before in Houston were 72 percent of those surveyed closed after 8 p.m. weekdays, 43 percent after 6 p.m. Saturdays and 85 percent closed on Sundays.

The organization reported 80 percent to 90 percent of stations closed after 8 p.m. weekdays and all day Sunday in Dallas-Fort Worth. Availability was slightly better in other cities, AAA said.

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