

Gas shortages again?

U.S. driving blamed

United Press International
CHICAGO — American driving habits have earned motorists a new American name for higher gasoline prices and fuel shortages, an industry analyst said recently.
But drivers need not fear a recurrence of the long lines of 1973 or 1974, which saw prices for \$1-a-gallon gasoline, said Herbert Hugo, senior editor of Oilgram.
The energy analyst said many refineries have been forced to close because of a petroleum shortage.
And American driving habits are behind the shortage, he said.
The Northwest Petroleum Association reported six of the nation's refineries are closed and those operating are producing only 15,000 barrels per day. That is 15,000 barrels short of the normal daily need.
"So there is a shortage," an NPA spokesman said, "and it is predicted for the next 10 days."
Some refineries have reported they are experiencing some "squeeze," a Department of Energy spokesman confirmed.

"But it is premature to predict what will happen," he cautioned.
"All of a sudden, everybody gets out on the highway again and starts driving like there's no energy crisis," Hugo said. "We motorists have been out on the highway burning it up on record rates. Then you have to expect prices to go up a little bit."
"Big cars are still selling big. If you drive an old clunker that uses leaded regular, you're okay. There is no shortage of leaded regular. The shortage has developed in no-lead."
"Nobody's going to have to stand in line, but there will be spot shortages. There will be no recurrence whatsoever of the nightmares of 1973."
Hugo suggested motorists keep their tanks at least half filled at all times, and buy gas during normal working hours.
He declined to predict how much of an increase in gasoline prices motorists could expect.
A Minnesota Energy Agency official also warned the shortage of oil may hike prices at the pump.

"We will be experiencing spot shortages and distribution problems for the next week or two," spokeswoman Dixie Diehl said. "If motorists will cut down on driving — not drive any more than necessary — it will help the supply situation and make sure there is enough gasoline for farmers and industry."
"The refineries that are open are operating at full capacity. But there just isn't enough product."
The Energy Department hopes to push oil pricing controls through Congress when it convenes in January to help limit gasoline consumption, the department spokesman said.
"In July we consumed a record 8 million barrels a day," the DOE spokesman said. "That is a number that greatly disturbs anyone who is in energy policy."
He added the strike of Iran's oil fields "adds another dimension to the issue."
Half of the oil burned in the United States is imported — and 9 percent of imported petroleum comes from Iran.

King death theory rebutted

United Press International
WASHINGTON — The House Assassinations Committee is trying to evaluate a widely publicized theory that Memphis, Tenn., police and the FBI joined in a conspiracy to assassinate Dr. Martin Luther King in 1968.
Frank Holloman, a key figure in the conspiracy scenario as a former FBI official who was then heading the Memphis police department, denounced the idea in testimony Friday as "slandorous" and "ludicrous."
The committee will move its attention to other phases of the assassination episode in its remaining hearings, but will focus on unanswered questions about whether anyone helped James Earl Ray, who originally pleaded guilty to King's murder but now denies he was the triggerman.
Taken together, these unanswered questions weave a sinister story, chief counsel C. Robert Haley said in a statement read to the committee before Holloman testified.

The committee, which questioned Ray earlier, announced it has no plans to take further testimony from him. Ray is now serving a 99-year sentence at a maximum security prison in Tennessee.
Holloman would have a crucial place in any conspiracy involving the Memphis police and the FBI because he worked directly under the late Director J. Edgar Hoover in Washington before he became Memphis police and fire director.
Another part of the scenario painted by some conspiracy buffs is Hoover's publicized dislike for King and the fact, since made public, that Hoover made King a target of the FBI's widespread smear campaigns under a secret project dubbed "Cointelpro."
Other elements of the theory:
—A security unit assigned to guard King was disbanded the day King arrived.
—Tactical units were kept five blocks away.
—A black detective on surveillance duty was removed an hour before King was shot.

—Finally, the Memphis police did not issue an "all-points bulletin" although it was known the suspect was fleeing in a white Mustang.
Holloman testified the security withdrawals were made at the request of King aides, who did not want police surrounding the civil rights leader during his visit in connection with a sanitation workers' strike.
The black detective was removed from a surveillance post because police learned of a threat on his life, Holloman testified, and the failure to issue an all-points bulletin was an innocent mistake.
Holloman also said Hoover never confided in him; he was not aware Hoover had negative feelings toward King, and that in his long FBI career, he never heard of the FBI's Cointelpro activities.
After his testimony, Holloman read a statement denouncing the conspiracy theory itself.
"It is unbelievable to me that the FBI would even entertain such an idea," Holloman said. "It is ludicrous and preposterous that I would be a party to such a thing either directly or indirectly."



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