

nation

Wanted: coal exports

Task force created to promote resource

United Press International
WASHINGTON — The Carter administration Tuesday launched an inter-agency task force to report to the president in six months on ways to expand U.S. coal exports, said Deputy Energy Secretary John Sawhill.

Sawhill told reporters the task force, which will examine trade barriers to coal exports, is one of five new administration programs promoting coal, the country's most abundant energy resource.

The others are the synthetic fuels bill, enforcement of a law on coal conversions in industrial boilers, a \$1 billion research and development program and \$10 billion in proposed subsidies for utility coal conversions.

Sawhill said his agency estimates coal exports could grow from the current 5-million-ton level to 80 million or 100 million tons by the end of the decade.

He said such a 20-fold increase in exports could create 38,000 new

mining jobs and 190,000 related jobs.

"There can be no argument that we must export more coal to improve the balance of trade, take pressure off the dollar and dampen inflation, as well as lift the burden of oil from the backs of our allies, who are far more dependent on imports than we are," said Sawhill.

Last year, the 20 industrialized nations participating in an International Energy Agency meeting and the

seven attending the Tokyo economic summit agreed to find ways to increase coal use.

The United States recently has also discussed expansion of its coal export trade with France and Spain.

Next week, Sawhill said, a delegation of senior U.S. coal industry officials will meet in Paris to help the International Energy Agency members find ways to boost their use of coal.

Gas prices force change

United Press International
WASHINGTON — The rising price of gasoline has forced a change in driving habits for about three out of every four motorists, and some have altogether abandoned plans to use their car on vacations, according to a recent Gallup poll.

The poll, conducted for the Highway Users Federation, a non-profit pro-highway group, found that 7 out of 10 motorists contacted said they were driving less this year than they did one year ago.

The survey, which included 1,572 adults, was taken during February and March.

It found that 63 percent had cut down on weekend or social trips, 49 percent had reduced shopping by car and 18 percent said they were taking shorter vacation trips by car. Another 12 percent said they had stopped using cars for vacations entirely.

The poll also found that 64 percent were opposed to the idea of an additional 50-cent per gallon gas tax to further discourage driving.



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No illegalities in silver crash

United Press International
WASHINGTON — Although the Commodities Futures Trading Commission continues to pursue reasons for last month's scary silver market crash, one commissioner told a congressional panel Tuesday so far there has been no evidence of illegal market manipulation.

In an obvious reference to billionaire brothers W. Herbert and Nelson Bunker Hunt of Texas, Commissioner David Gartner told a House Government Operations subcommittee the agency has found no evidence of a corner, squeeze or manipulation of the market.

Silver prices plummeted to \$10 an

ounce in late March — down from a high of \$50 in January, and much of the blame was attributed to the Hunts, who after acquiring massive amounts of silver, were unable to meet their contract payments known as margin calls.

The Hunts' action sparked a panic selling spree, and a subsequent spree in stocks of corporations known to have connections with the wealthy Texans.

The subcommittee invited the Hunts to testify, but by Tuesday they had not responded. "They'll testify, one way or the other," declared subcommittee chairman Benjamin Rosenthal, D-N.Y.

A subcommittee aide said the panel was expected to vote in the next day or two on whether to subpoena the brothers.

"The Commodities Futures Trading Commission has nothing to apologize for with respect to its role in connection with recent reverberations in the silver futures market," Gartner said.

"The silver phenomenon was free enterprise at its finest hour," he said. "It demonstrated the system works."

Because of the large margin requirements at the time of the crash, Gartner told the panel, "No one other than large speculators and unwise brokers got hurt."

"The market cured itself," he said.

Commissioner Read Dunn said he doesn't think there is a need for additional regulation, and indicated much of the problem was due to hoarding by foreign investors.

Commissioner Robert Martin agreed further government regulation to ensure customer protection is unnecessary. He said investors should be protected against fraud, deceit and improper diversion of their funds, but regulation "should not offer any shelter from the consequences of their own judgement."

Chairman James Stone was in the minority. "I think the financial fabric of the United States was endangered," he said.

Fat man wants stomach stapled

United Press International
ORLANDO, Fla. — Bill Murphy's friends are trying to collect enough money to finance stomach-stapling surgery for the 600-pound man.

"I just don't know how to come up with \$5,000," Murphy said Monday. "I just don't know. Maybe my friends will think of something."

He says he will die without surgery because of the strain his heart bears. Just talking on the telephone takes his breath away. A walk to the mailbox to collect his monthly \$239 disability payment leaves Murphy huffing for 10 minutes.

But even the indignity of bathing in the backyard with a garden hose because he can't fit into the tub has not motivated Murphy to keep from gaining weight. He has abandoned one diet after another. "I just don't have no will power," he said.

"The whole thing in a nutshell is I don't have no activity. I don't have nothing to turn to because no one will hire me. I say to myself, why not enjoy food while I still can?" he said.

"The way the doctor talked, it wouldn't be very long before it would get the best of me, all this fat," Murphy, a bachelor, said. "In other words, I'm like a walking time bomb. My heart could go any time."

He says the only solution is an operation to close off his stomach so it holds no more than 2 ounces of food.

Doctors tell him he will lose 60 pounds in three months after the stomach stapling surgery and 30 percent more of his weight in the next year and a half. A team of surgeons have offered their services for free. Now Murphy is trying to finance a \$6,000, two-week stay at Shands Teaching Hospital in Gainesville by the end of July.

Because he has no job and no medical insurance, the hospital requires the money be paid before admission. "Without any insurance, we need to have the money up front," said Lisa Stewart, a spokeswoman for Shands.

Lipstick alibi kept secret

United Press International
DALLAS — An attorney for an appliance repairman, charged with the "lipstick" slaying of a woman, 28, says he has verified portions of the suspect's alibi.

However, attorney Robert Cady Monday refused to reveal the alibi of Donald Hemphill, 30, who was charged with first degree murder for the March 31 strangulation of Debra Martinson.

Hemphill remains jailed in lieu of \$500,000 bond.

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