

from our viewpoint...

Gas price generates ill-thought-out plan

The soaring price of gasoline has generated some really bad ideas, including demands for price controls and an ill-thought-out plan to cancel motor fuel taxes when prices spike.

We tried price controls in the 1970s, during the first so-called "energy crisis." They didn't lower prices, but they did produce long lines at the pump, spot shortages and major aggravation.

Memories are short, though, and many Democrats are again calling for controls. They won't work any better today — you can't increase supply by cutting prices — but demagoguery being what it is, politicians can't resist an easy target.

The truth is, prices are already going down, backing off the record peaks and settling into a more "normal" level. The second truth we have not learned is that this "energy crisis" isn't going to go away.

High prices are the product not of greed or "excess profits" by oil companies, but of spiraling demand for oil in the face of tight supplies. This push comes not so much from the U.S. and Europe today, but from China and India, where awakening economies allow more and more people to own a car.

Someday soon, oil will be too expensive to burn as fuel and we'll have to find a replacement.

The government doesn't have to do anything. It'll happen when we decide we can't afford gasoline for our cars. We'll demand a cheaper fuel, and industry will produce one.

And that's how it'll be. We won't run out of oil, exactly, but it'll become valuable for industrial uses to just burn. There are other fuels, but the world will need plastics, tires and a million other products. We'll find ways to replace many of those uses with renewable resources, too, as oil gets more scarce.

In a way, the oil companies are doing us a favor. The sooner we switch to alternative fuels, the sooner we'll not have to worry about global warming and pollution from internal-combustion engines. That's not bad.

Then there is the plan to repeal the federal gasoline tax when prices average over \$3 per gallon. That's about the worst thing we could do, encouraging people to drive more when fuel supplies are tight and oil is expensive.

This bill, backed by Kansas freshman Rep. Nancy Boyda, shows the liberals talking out of both sides of their mouths. One day, they want to cut global emissions, the next they want to encourage driving.

That makes no sense, and it could ruin the federal highway program, which depends on the 18-cents-per-gallon tax to supply money for road repairs and rebuilding.

The federal Highway Trust Fund already faces the threat of bankruptcy as high prices, more efficient vehicles and the shift to alternative fuels depletes revenue in the face of inflation and increasing demand for roads.

Ms. Boyda's answer: tax the oil companies. But they need the money to fund the search for more oil and reduce dependence on foreign sources, especially in the Mideast and Venezuela.

Well, you can't have your cake and eat it, too. High fuel prices may hurt, but they will spur us to better things. Just remember that next time you fill up. And smile, if you can. — *Steve Haynes*



Good Samaritans in the heartland

By Todd Davidson

www.Pinchitoff.com

Recently I went to our nation's heartland for maintenance on a few rentals. Shortly after I had arrived to paint two of three houses, Roger Collins of Goodland (324 Center) came over from next door to greet me and remind me of the offer of shelter in his basement if a tornado occurred.

Prior to my venture to the Midwest, Roger and I had begun a friendship with each other over the phone and he had offered the use of his electricity during the two-week work camp sort of speaking.

I graciously accepted, however difficult, because I had been raised to systematically say no thank you to all offers. I have known the derogatory side of consistently saying no thank you, yet it is still deeply rooted in my personality, along with my extreme independence.

Roger is an open book, kind and giving with an instinct to care for others; we hit it off like old friends quickly. We told stories from reflections, heroes, and favorite movies to past illnesses. As a good neighbor he made it a point to come over and give me praise on the third day and beyond.

This was when I was in the mid-way point from not only the work that I had planned but yet the work that arose by surprise. I was down but not out. I knew I just had to keep one foot



from other pens

● commentary

in front of the other until I could see the light at the end of the tunnel, apparently it showed.

Though I did appreciate Roger's praises and offers of soda, water or anything he could do. Shortly thereafter, Roger figured out my personality and stopped asking if I wanted a big drink and just stopped by with one for me. I was given the knowledge I was really being looked out for. For a near stranger to do that in addition to offer whatever he could from his washing machine to his couch to sleep, solely to make my work and my short visit pleasant was such an awe inspiring culture shock. It was like noticing the fresh green on a new spring morning.

Not only was I accepted into the neighborhood without reservations, I was also invited to dinner or lunch, (breakfast, dinner then supper in the Midwest) by Roger's neighbor and friends, the Baird Family.

We had all enjoyed salad, corn on the cob, rolls, mashed potatoes and homemade chicken noodle soup. The chicken noodle soup was the same as my Mother used to make for a dressing on Thanksgiving. This is one recipe that I

had never learned and had always missed. So in a way it was like a visit to my own old home cooking as a child.

In addition to cooking a wonderful dinner, Mrs. Baird is also eager and happy to take care of Roger's lawn and to clean out anyone's garage in the neighborhood given the opportunity. Roger has a condition resulting in having to have his shins seized to his feet, having no feeling in his feet and no ankle movement makes it very difficult to do yard work.

While I was painting the second house, I was visited by two Mormon elders, one from Bellevue Calif., and the other from Utah. Having been the second visit, they knew I was content with my own religion, however they were happily off of their bicycles and grabbed paintbrushes to help me for over an hour without a word of religion. To me that speaks volumes and I hope they don't lose that kindness through their venture in life. I was not only surprised, but proud of their character.

With hard and fast work and a lot of support and luck, I was able to finish all that I needed to accomplish within the 11 days, and as I rode off into the western sunset, I was very thankful to have the opportunity to meet Roger Collins and the Baird family. I am enlightened to have found a place where innocent hospitality still exists.

I look forward to my next visit to Goodland.

A thanks for the great health care

To the Editor:

Earlier this month, my husband and I were in Goodland for 3 1/2 weeks on business. My husband is originally from there and we have visited often.

Unfortunately on this trip, he became ill, and we had to visit your Goodland Regional Medical Center emergency room.

I can't say enough about the wonderful care he received both in the emergency room and at the Pioneer Health Clinic.

The two nurses in the emergency room, on our two visits, were wonderful to us. The care he received from Janna Eisenbart and Sondra Krayca was outstanding.

Janna made sure we got in to see Dr. Wallace M. Curry, from Western Kansas Urological Associates of Hays, as soon as possible, and he sent us to Hays for more tests. Janna has called to check up on us since our return to California.

We want the people of Goodland to know how lucky they are to have such caring people working in your great medical facility.

We would appreciate it if you would print our thank you in *The Goodland Star-News*, which we subscribe to.

Karen and Elton Howard
Yucca Valley, Calif.

To the Editor:

I want to thank everyone who came out to help place and pick up the flags from the veterans' graves on Memorial Day.

Your assistance is appreciated, and in my



from our readers

● to the editor

opinion the Goodland Cemetery was beautiful that day.

My thanks is extended to the Boy Scouts and Veterans of Foreign Wars for your support.
Marshall C. Squires II
American Legion Commander
Goodland

To the Editor:

As President of the National Association of Wheat Growers and a Kansas wheat farmer, I would like to take this opportunity to remind everyone, especially consumers, how the Food Security Act, currently being debated in Congress, will benefit them.

As Americans, we enjoy the safest, most abundant, and most affordable food and fiber

supply in the world. For less than one-third of one percent of the federal budget, federal farm policy plays a large role in this bounty by providing a safety net for American growers and their communities.

While the National Association of Wheat Growers and its members are advocating minor changes to make the current safety net more equitable, there is no denying this legislation has been beneficial — saving taxpayers money and helping to keep farmers on the land.

These farmers, in addition to providing a safe, reliable domestic food source, contribute to energy independence through renewable fuels as well as being true stewards of a large portion of our nation's soil and water.

It's important for all Americans to understand that our nation's food security is not free. We must support an adequate safety net for those who provide for the most basic of our needs, our food.

John C. Thaumert
President
National Association of Wheat Growers
Sylvan Grove

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