

How readers are saving gas

Bucky's gas station - 132nd and W Center Rd. If you pay cash you get 3 cents a gallon off. It is ridiculous to think that we can get cheap gas again. I may cut out cable TV and telephone service (I have a cell phone). My job does require that I drive all over Omaha on a weekly basis. It is not possible for me to drive less. I do my shopping while in a given area of town before or after working with my clients.

Barbara Maxwell

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It would be nice to be able to ride my bicycle to/from work, but I live in western La Vista and work a second shift job north of downtown, so pedaling home after 11 p.m. doesn't seem safe to me for a myriad of reasons. What some people fail to remember is that not everyone works traditional "bankers" hours to ride their bicycles to work, nor does the local bus system run late enough for those of us who work in the evening. I do drive a fairly fuel-efficient four-cylinder car, so I guess that will suffice. It would be nice to eventually see an efficient bus and light rail system similar to Tri-Met in Portland, Ore., so people could have a choice of how they want to get around besides driving. Omaha appears to have the population base to warrant such a system. MAT seems to be doing better, but it is a slow process.

I agree that high gas prices are merely an inconvenience, and the best way to "weather the storm" is to tighten the financial belt and perhaps trade off the gas-guzzling cars, trucks, and SUVs that you may own. It's not worth it for the supposed social status, or the engine power, and as far as I've noticed, most people who operate such large vehicles have no business behind the wheel. Most people can make do with a small car, small truck or small SUV, but invent elaborate excuses to buy or lease a much larger vehicle.

Oscar, La Vista

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I grew up in Nebraska and moved to Western Canada about ten years ago. Guess what? The good ol' U.S.A. has the cheapest gas of any "developed country". Why is it that we Americans are also the loudest complainers when our precious fuel cost rises?

In Vancouver we are at about \$5.25 per gallon and have been above \$4.00 per gallon for several years. I was recently in Munich, Germany, the price is over US \$10.00 per gallon. Similar story for Italy, Austria, and England.

If all else fails, remember you are not required to use a car to get from "A" to "B". I choose to live in a location where I am not a slave to my car. I also am not beneath walking or riding a bicycle to get around.

Dustin

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I'm sorry people, but this is not a crisis. An inconvenience yes, but not a crisis. A cyclone is a crisis. An earthquake with 50k dead is a crisis. An earlier poster said it all: step back from the

ciggies, the fast food, the lottery, big gulps, big grabs, etc, and you'll be amazed how much you'll save. If you paid \$3 a gallon a year ago, and now you're paying \$4, you're only paying about another \$50 a month with a typical 20 mpg car driving 1K monthly. Eliminate 2 Starbucks a week and you'll be fine.

Jeff, Fremont, Neb.

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My husband and I traded vehicles. I have a 10 minute commute and he has a 40 minute commute. We own a Ford F150 which is paid for and a 2008 Hyundai Santa Fe, which is not paid for. The Santa Fe gets the better gas mileage, so this is how we compromise. We'd love to get a smaller car to replace the truck but don't want two vehicle payments.

Ann M.

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I live in Griswold, Iowa, and work in Omaha. My wife and I carpool together, which saves a lot by leaving my truck parked. Also, more commonly, we tend to cry at the gas station when we go to fill up!

Mike O'Donnell, Griswold, Iowa

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Because we have two children who need to be dropped off at daycare before my husband and I go to work every day, public transportation, bikes, and motorcycles aren't an option. My husband and I work for the same company and try to ride together as often as possible, but in reality, this ends up being only about half the time. We have moved our car seats over from the 20 miles per gallon SUV to our Hyundai Elantra which gets a minimum of 30 mpg. This way, we do the vast majority of our driving in the vehicle that gets better mileage and try to drive the SUV as little as possible. We have really noticed the difference in the number of times we have to fill up our tanks. As soon as we are ready to get rid of the almost 6-year-old Hyundai, I'm getting a Prius.

Amy Schaap, Omaha

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I took the Drive Smart Challenge at drivesmarterchallenge.org. It provided me with some concrete dollar savings ideas for changes to my driving habits and car maintenance specific to my make and model.

I also plan to attend "Getting Around Green in the Big 'O'" this Saturday, May 24, from 10 a.m. to noon at the Neighborhood Center, 115 S. 49th Ave. It's a workshop about different ways to get around Omaha while minimizing reliance on fossil fuels and high gas prices. This event is sponsored by the Green Neighborhood Council of the Green Omaha Coalition.

Daniel Lawsem Omaha

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I have moved closer to work so that I can ride a bike, take the bus, or walk home. Plus most of my shopping occurs between home and work. Sometimes I go days or a week with out driving my car. So people; stop just complaining; take action.

Jim, south Omaha

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This is very simple. Yes gas prices are high, but is it really having an impact on our lives? It shouldn't be that hard to cut out a few things to make up for it. The people I hear complain the most are those people who spend their money foolishly and of course, the media, who wants us all to believe how terrible things are.

Let's compare:

\$2 a gallon - Average miles driven per year = 12,000 miles at 16 miles per gallon

Gas cost - \$1,500

\$4 a gallon - Average miles driven per year = 12,000 miles at 16 miles per gallon

Gas cost - \$3,000

Sure, it will cost \$1,500 more a year, but that can easily be made up by not buying bottled water, cigarettes, sodas, fast food, and dining out just one time less per month. It is simple. Change your lifestyle, get healthier, and have more money in your pocket.

Aaron Dinslage, Omaha

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I drive a small car, and I have made it a point to always drive under the speed limit, especially on the interstate. It is really amazing the mileage you can get when you slow down. As a result, gas prices haven't affected me all that much. I still spend about \$20 a week for

gas, but I am sure that is much less than most other people spend these days.

This can be a lesson for other people. Simply slow down, and you will be amazed how much more mileage you can get from your car.

Marc Barrett, Omaha

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I'm trying to be more organized when shopping so I make fewer trips to the store.

I commute approximately 50 miles per day to work so would love to carpool but I have irregular work hours so it's out of the question. Since I have to go to work, I am driving slower and using my car's air conditioner less. I try to drive about 5 under the speed limit and I've gained over 2 miles per gallon so far. Unfortunately, most people haven't caught on to that and just fly by me. I know 2 mpg doesn't seem like much, but if everyone did that it would make a huge difference in demand.

My work involves a lot of travel so we are trying to utilize phone and video conferencing much more now. When possible, I just say I can't participate in person, only via phone or computer.

Driving less is a difficult adjustment to make in rural Nebraska because there just aren't many other options. If public transportation were available, I would definitely use it. I've ridden buses and subways in cities and it hasn't been bad at all. In fact, it is often much more relaxing than driving!

L.F., Minden, Neb.

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I am voting for Obama.

M. Hayden

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I have stopped taking plane trips and will not fly again until the economy improves. I used to fly five or six times per year and I estimate my savings from not flying will be \$1,500 to \$2,000 this year.

Van Argyrakis, Omaha

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We recently have converted three of four sales vehicles to Civic Hybrids. After break-even assumptions of \$3.50 per gallon (which we've obviously blown past) and 30,000-plus miles per year, it became cheaper to buy new Civic Hybrids than to continue filling Ford Explorers over the next five years. These calculations did not even take into account the cost of maintenance on the vehicles.

The only thing that makes me happy about \$3.69 gas is knowing we're getting 43 miles per gallon instead of 17 mpg. I just can't wait to see how happy I'll be at \$4 or \$5.

Eric

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I am a state worker and e-mailed the governor (asking) for the option to work four ten-hour days, since our pay is very minimal and he vetoed our pay raise last fall (LB321). I have not heard from him.

Trish Robey

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My wife and I are over-the-road truck drivers. We are saving fuel by limiting our speed to 65 miles per hour, from 75mph. (This only added 3-4 hours on this week's trip from Los Angeles to Baltimore, Md.) This saves us about 15-20 percent on our diesel fuel consumption. We now are getting 6.25 miles per gallon. Up from 5.0 mpg. That saves us about 10,000 gallons or \$45,500-plus at today's prices, in a year that we travel 250,000 miles (our average).

In my personal vehicle (an '07 V-6 Ford Escape), we get 19-20 mpg traveling at 75mph. By slowing to 55-60 mph, we now get between 29-30 mpg. In an average 30 mile trip, this only adds about 3-5 minutes in travel time. Not to mention it's much safer.

My motorcycle gets about 45-50 mpg. I ride it as much as I possibly can. By far the most efficient mode of travel that we have.

Keeping the air pressure in your tires up to the manufacturer's specified levels, will help you gain another 3-5 percent as well.

We have noticed some people driving slower recently. But not many.

Maybe Nebraska should lower the interstate speed limit to 65 mph? It's more than likely not a very popular move, but it makes sense. Lower speed equals lower consumption equals less pollution, and less demand - hopefully leading to lower prices.

That's what I've got. But what ... would I know, I'm just a truck driver.

Jeff, Grand Island

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I traded in my car, keys and traffic headaches for a helmet, bike and fingerless gloves as part of Activate Omaha's Bicycle Commuter Challenge. The first week I saved a quarter tank of gas on my little Saturn ION by riding to work three out of five days. I'll ride four days to work this week. Not only have I noticed the savings, but also I'm riding a bit faster and getting into great shape. I can't wait to see how fast I can ride to work by the end of the summer!

Denise Lechner

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I am a 39-year-old man and I have decided to park the Ford Contour as much as possible.

I recently bought my fifth scooter. I drive it to and from work and anywhere I need to get in Omaha. It gets 70 miles per gallon and I can drive all week on one gallon of gas. It is peppy and a blast to ride. I wish more people in Omaha gave it a try.

If your thinking of getting one, make sure you get at least an 80cc. I have a 150cc and can beat any traffic I run into. I went to a bike store and added a cup holder and a bike basket. It's cheap transportation and feels good to be doing what I can to save the planet. My nerdy side has never had so much fun.

People stop me at stop lights and the gas station to ask about it. I highly recommend it.

Dino Moorman, Omaha

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As part of ActivateOmaha's 3rd Annual Bicycle Commuter Challenge, I'm participating on one of 50 local teams of bicyclists who are commuting to work. Not only does this benefit my personal fitness, but it represents significant savings on gas.

The challenge runs from May 12th, through September 17th, but many of the cyclists continue throughout the Fall. A few ride year round.

More information about the challenge, and about registering a team can be found at <http://www.activateomaha.org> under their cycling link. The challenge has already begun, but we just started the second week. It isn't too late to get on board.

It started with the Mayor's Bike Ride on May 12th, and culminates with the August 17th Corporate Cycling Challenge.

Brian, Omaha

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I bought a motorcycle, I now get about 45 miles to a gallon. I've cut my gas cost by 75 percent. My truck now sits in the driveway waiting for rain, sleet and yes snow!

If I had a bike trail to my job, I would ride my pedal bike.

Mitch Cruse

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I have been putting my car in neutral while coasting down hills for the past 3-4 months - don't know if this works or not.

The biggest thing I noticed is that I filled the car with regular gas - not ethanol - my last tank full and I got about 28.7miles per gallon in my 2004 Camry. I have used ethanol for the past 5 years in my vehicles, but if this mileage continues, I will stay with the regular and not ethanol blends.

I also have been trying to consolidate as many trips as I can, and if the trip is less than 1-2 miles, I ride my bike.

Mike, Lincoln

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I traded in my Jeep for a Honda CRV. Definitely a lot better.

Sam Achelpohl, Omaha

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We try to consolidate trips as much as possible; this seems to be the most effective change. We also try to keep the tires inflated to the proper pressure or maybe even a pound or two over, change the air filters when they're dirty, etc. Another thing we've noticed when on the highway is driving slightly under the speed limit helps. Driving 60 mph instead of 65 adds 1- 2 miles per gallon on average. For shorter trips (i.e. Lincoln, Fremont, etc.) it doesn't add that much time to the trip...a few minutes at most.

For any senators or representatives that may be reading this column, we need a comprehensive energy policy! One which includes drilling in ANWAR and the continental shelf as well as oil shale extraction. In the meantime, we need to be developing alternatives to oil usage (i.e. hydrogen cells).

It's reported that there is enough oil in Alaska and just off the coast that would enable the U.S. to be energy independent. The technology reportedly exists to extract this oil in an efficient and environmentally sensitive manner. Let's get it done!

Chuck Cochrane, Elkhorn

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I live off 78th and Pacific, but work and play in west Omaha. I pack a duffle bag every day with a change of clothes to save me a trip.

Ted Greguska, Omaha

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I commute nearly every day, but as the temperatures rose above freezing this year, I started making the trip on a motorcycle, and will continue to do so whenever conditions allow. Getting 50+ mile per gallon beats the 17 or so mpg that an in-city car gets.

P.J. Hartman, Omaha

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I have traded off my truck for a four-cylinder Mazda Tribute.

My wife will soon be trading for a hybrid car.

We try to limit and consolidate as many trips as possible.

Larry K., Omaha

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I am a single mom, and money is tight. I drive downtown from west Omaha to work every day. I am currently looking for either a job in west O, or a home closer to my work (like walking distance), so I can eliminate the majority of my drive.

Shari W. Seals, Omaha

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I can't cut back fuel use much. Fuel is like food, we have to have it. I do plan to get a motorcycle, but the only draw back about that is the long, cold, snowy winters and rainy days when you can't ride it. Omaha has many great jogging trails that can be used in the summer for transportation. The president should call a national oil emergency and open up Alaska and off-shore for oil drilling and by-pass the enviromental people. This will also make many jobs. Alaska residents favor oil drilling. What worries me most is what's going to happen next summer with oil prices (or 3-4 years in the future with oil prices) if we don't start drilling for our own oil.

Thom Sullivan, Columbus, Ohio

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I have three transportation choices in my garage. The truck gets 15 miles per gallon, the car gets 20 mpg, the bike gets 35 mpg. Every day I can " I leave the car and truck parked and take the bike. I save money and have more fun. Motorcycles were meant to be ridden every day, not just during weekend poker runs!

Joe Niv, Omaha

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