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The Ever Rising Price Of Gasoline

Stonington Residents Can Head Over State Lines To Purchase Gas But The Rising Prices Can Still Effect Local Businesses, Food Costs And Transportation

By Bree Shirvell and Jessie King | Email the authors | March 2, 2011

2 Comments

Holding your breath as you pull into the gas station might become common practice. Did the prices stay the same since the last time you filled up, go up less than the gas station down the street, or is the place you pulled into so expensive you drive off without filling up?

"A number of residents have contacted me concerned about gas prices," First Selectman Edward Haberek said.

According to AAA, the national price of a gallon of gas is \$3.25. In Connecticut, the average is \$3.55 and in New London county, the average is \$3.53. Those numbers are changing every day sometimes even every couple of hours and as the conflict in the Middle East escalates, it's likely so will the price at the pump.

"There's a lot of political trouble in the Middle East, right now, especially in Libya," said Jacklyn Ghergurovich, an AAA spokesperson. The political disruption is causing prices to jump."

Connecticut's gas prices increased by 13 cents in the past month and in Stonington residents can be thrilled if the pay anything under \$3.50. According to MapQuest's gas prices, during the last 48 hours the cheapest place to buy gas was at the Route 1 Sunoco in Pawcatuck, where regular gas cost \$3.52 a gallon. The most expensive was the Mystic Shell on Whitehall Ave., where regular gas cost \$3.58 a gallon. Of course, those prices are likely already out of date.

While Stonington locked in its fuel prices early in this year's budget season, Haberek said he was concerned about the potential ripple effect sky-high prices could have on residents, businesses, transportation costs and even food prices.

Stonington residents are a little luckier than other New London county residents. With Rhode Island so close, many can and do, according to Stonington-Mystic Patch's Facebook page, head over the state lines to purchase gas. AAA reports the average cost of regular gasoline is \$3.40 a gallon in Rhode Island and MapQuest lists Cumberland Farms on 129 Granite St. in Westerly as having the lowest gas in the area, at \$3.40 a gallon.

But while residents can head over the border to buy gas, business owners suffer. Many are hoping the high gas prices don't keep visitors and locals away from the stores.

Wendy Bury of the Stonington Borough Merchants association said gas is just one of the many concerns merchants have regarding tourism and business this year.

"We are in a state of 'wait and see' with regards to proposed state taxes, tourisms districts, rising gas

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prices and its effects on visitors,” Bury said.

The good news she said was that local businesses are doing well and many thrive year round, relying not just on tourists, but on residents.

“We cannot control the taxes, the potential effects of gas prices and regulations, so we control what we can,” Bury said. Through advertising and marketing, Bury said they hope to continue to make sure people are aware of the unique and wonderful things our area has to offer.

“People will try to stay closer to home,” Haberek said if the gas prices continue to rise, adding that cookouts and day trips could become common.

In addition to the effects on the local tourism industry, Haberek said the prices were concerning for what they could mean for businesses in terms of transportation costs.

We can’t control gas prices, officials at the International Energy Agency are trying to mitigate the situation, but if things worsen there are strategic petroleum reserves and emergency stockpiles maintained by the government and corporate agencies, which Ghergurovich said have not been tapped.

“It’s impossible to predict where the prices are going right now,” Ghergurovich said. “Political strife and struggle, demand, play a part in the price of gas. Demand has been up because consumer confidence is up, also the strength of the U.S. dollar in foreign markets and gas and stockpiles. Those all play a role in gas prices.”

Still, filling up at the area’s most expensive gas station today is better than paying \$4.39 a gallon back in July of 2008. That was the highest recorded Connecticut average. At least for now.

Where do you buy gas? [Tell us in the comments.](#)

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