

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Gas gouging

Fairbanks Daily News-Miner (AK) - Wednesday, March 25, 2009
Author: Bill Mitchell, Fairbanks

It is starting to appear that our state Legislature isn't going to do anything to protect Alaskans from the price gouging that we've been victimized by at the pump for a long time now.

I will not be able to vote for any incumbent who isn't willing to do whatever it takes to correct this massive injustice that we've faced for far too long. I hope that enough feel the same way that most if not all incumbents up for re-election are sent packing after the next election cycle. Regardless of their party affiliation, they will have demonstrated that they are unworthy of the position they hold. I guess legislative salary issues trump protecting the people from the ongoing pillaging at the pump.

Is there nothing the governor can do to stop the pillaging? I thank her for refusing the federal funds that would have created more future overhead.

North Pole gas prices

Fairbanks Daily News-Miner (AK) - Tuesday, March 17, 2009
Author: Sherry Smith, North Pole
March 16, 2009

To the editor :

The local tax has been removed, and we are still paying more than Fairbanks. What I find really odd is the fact that the gas prices in Tok also are less than ours. Last time I checked, Tok was quite a bit further away from the refinery. I guess Fairbanks is too.

Why are we paying so much more?

High gas prices in state smell fishy

Anchorage Daily News (AK) - Monday, March 16, 2009

Today I researched using "gasbuddy.com" prices for fuel in the following cities. I then subtracted the state fuel tax for each type of fuel and compared those prices to Anchorage fuel prices , with the following results:

Great Falls -- regular gas \$0.64; diesel \$1.70.

Phoenix -- regular gas \$0.55; diesel \$1.67.

Seattle -- regular gas \$0.61; diesel \$1.69.

Honolulu -- regular gas \$0.26; diesel \$ 0.67.

As this information shows, we are being taken advantage of by our local oil companies and refineries. When we are paying more than Hawaii and have an in-state source for crude, then there can be no excuse for the high prices .

Also, these prices are compared with Anchorage prices . Most of the state pays far higher.

Everyone, and I mean everyone, needs to make our legislators and governor aware that this situation is not acceptable. Consider that most of us are affected by transportation for our food and necessities, and we are paying an additional \$1.70 for diesel.

-- Charles Foster

Wasilla

Fuel tax suspension helps a little

Anchorage Daily News (AK) - Saturday, March 14, 2009

Glad to hear Gov. Sarah Palin pledged her support to extending the motor fuel tax suspension. The governor and lawmakers working together last year set the policy in place as part of the governor's comprehensive energy plan. I encourage legislators to keep this important tax suspension in place. Alaskans are still paying higher prices at the fuel pump than our neighbors in the Lower 48. Thank you, governor, for protecting our pocketbooks.

-- Corie Cruise

Wasilla

Gasoline threat

Fairbanks Daily News-Miner (AK) - Thursday, February 26, 2009

Author: Thomas McGhee, North Pole

Feb. 17, 2009

To the editor :

No illegal activity? A threat to create oil shortages and dire consequences intentionally would directly affect individuals, companies and entire communities. The evidence already is here today. "Jeff Cook, spokesman for Flint Hills Resources Alaska, forecast fuel shortages and other dire consequences should lawmakers approve anti-gouging or price cap bills." (Daily News-Miner, Feb. 13.) If that's not a threat, I don't know what one is.

There are no oil shortages, and there never has been a lack of oil other than those made by the companies. And why would anyone not want to protect residents?

Sell or close Flint Hills! It won't make it any worse for North Pole or the Fairbanks North Star Borough. We will survive your failures.

The truth is, price -gouging oil companies, greedy CEOs and outrageous union pay scales have put the public and private sector into stop-spending-and-protect-ourselves mode. In turn, it has

back-fired and crippled everyone. Thanks, big oil companies, out-of-control unions and overpaid CEOs; you didn't look out for the consumer.

Is this referred to as biting the hand that feeds you?

No gouging?

Fairbanks Daily News-Miner (AK) - Tuesday, February 17, 2009
Author: Bob Bederka, Fairbanks
Feb. 13, 2009

To the editor :

OK, let me get this right. Jay Ramras and the rest of our politicians say there is no gouging on our fuel price .

Someone please explain to me then how oil can drop to \$34 a barrel and gas in Fairbanks goes up? For that matter, explain why we are paying high gas prices to subsidize jet fuel prices ? Anyone in town who drives a jet, please raise your hand.

Jay should quit sniffing whatever it is he is sniffing and smell the coffee. That's coffee bought locally and not imported for him by his pals in the oil companies.

For that matter, all the doom and gloom that the oil companies and Jay predict will happen if we enact price caps might affect Jay's and Sarah's political contributions and actually be a good thing for us, the average normal Joe. Our prices are way out of line and it's time for something to be done. After all, tourist season is coming and all that does is give producers and retailers reason to raise our prices more!

Oh, and on a separate note ... Scott, leave Mount McKinley alone. We already renamed Alaskaland to Pioneer Park because some idiot somewhere thought it was supposed to be like Disney World with rides and roller coasters. Out-of-staters should quit being allowed to run our state.

Cut prices

Fairbanks Daily News-Miner (AK) - Tuesday, February 10, 2009
Author: Cami Pena, Fairbanks
Jan. 30, 2009

To the editor :

I dread going to the grocery store. There's nothing to fear more than looking at your barely-a-week-family-of-three groceries and realizing it slightly passes \$200.

What happened to the days when a box of Wheat Thins was only \$2, instead of rounding up to \$4? I understand that as times get tough in our economy (i.e. Iraq War) prices will skyrocket. Yet how come they don't come back down?

Gasoline was such a huge struggle and although Alaska is still a dollar higher than the Lower 48,

the prices still dropped. In a sense it infuriates me that grocery stores think that since the need for food is so high, people will still purchase groceries at a low income. The average American family's income has dropped dramatically with the recent downfall in employment. It would be nice if we could catch some sort of a break, soon!

Now don't get me wrong, I strongly appreciate the Safeway Club Card, Fred Meyer Rewards and even Wal-Mart's low prices , but it's still not enough. If most of Americans are overweight, how do you expect this to change with healthier and organic food prices through the roof?

So in regard to President-elect Obama, I understand he'd like to help the economy, but let's help the families first and cut prices .

Alaska should build a refinery

Anchorage Daily News (AK) - Monday, February 9, 2009

Once again the Legislature has failed to do its job. After completing a 54-page report, the House Judiciary Committee has said that it has based its findings on "intuition" (ADN article Feb 3).

I think it's based on something else, but I won't go there. Their findings are based on the refiners subsidizing jet fuel prices by gouging the public at the gas pump.

The article's statement that "Because jets can refuel anywhere, jet fuel prices are controlled by the world market" is total hogwash. As a retired airline pilot I can tell you that jets don't land just anywhere, they usually like to land at their destination. Anchorage is one of the largest air cargo crossroads of the world because of its location. It is a shorter distance from here to there, period. If the cargo haulers don't land here where will they land? Whitehorse? Reykjavik? Greenland?

Those places would have trouble refining jet fuel at world prices . Will they fly extra and go out of their way to buy cheaper fuel? I don't think the savings would add up. Some agency outside the Legislature, the Attorney General's office perhaps, should do the investigating. Better yet, the state should build its own modern refinery and run it like the profit-making railroad.

-- Bob Picard
Anchor Point

Villages need fuel, food relief now

Anchorage Daily News (AK) - January 16, 2009

Recent reports from Emmonak, a village of 800 on the mouth of the Yukon River, have raised grave concerns. The high price of heating oil is causing families to choose between heat and basic food supplies. It is a problem that should concern us all. Immediate action is needed by the state to ensure villages faced with these unique problems have enough food, and if this can't happen the private citizens of Alaska need to organize a relief campaign. Time is wasting.

-- Brian Whittle

Anchorage Daily News (AK) - Thursday, January 15, 2009

Price gouging is out of control

Your solution for high oil prices in Alaska does not go far enough. In a recent national campaign, a sandwich shop advertised \$4.99 sandwiches that cost \$5.99 here. My knee surgeries cost twice what they would have in Seattle. Years ago, when I was buying a new car from an Outside company, the local dealership wanted \$800 to accept delivery, when the Outside rate for the same service was \$150.

We need investigation into all of the higher prices we pay. Using your standard, we need a state agency that will investigate any price that is more than 10 percent above a specified Lower 48 average, maybe Seattle's. This agency should have the power to levy fines against plumbers and doctors and retailers and anyone else who is price gouging.

We need an agency that will determine what a fair profit to make is on any and all transactions. Why I have heard in the good years, fishermen can really rake it in. Why do I have to pay those exorbitant prices for halibut? A lot I had my eye on on the Hillside was going for \$150,000. They bought it years ago for a fraction of that. Talk about gouging.

Let's get all of the Alaska price gouging under control, not just the refiners. A state agency to regulate profits is just what the doctor ordered.

-- Brian Leach

Anchorage

Take a gasoline holiday

Anchorage Daily News (AK) - Wednesday, January 14, 2009

Too bad everyone can't do as I do. If they could, gas would be \$.50 a gallon; not \$2.50 like it is here.

I filled the truck in Anchorage Nov. 3, and still have 1/4 tank. I am striving to buy gas every two months.

Not everyone can do that but still everyone has the power to bring down the price . If everyone would pick a day and not buy gas -- say Wednesday -- the price would come down. But will they? No! How could that be a problem? Not buy gas on a designated day? If you believe in doing this, notify all friends and relatives in and out of state.

-- Cliff Wade

Soldotna

Palin should take on gas prices

Anchorage Daily News (AK) - Monday, January 12, 2009

I used to find it amusing when friends from the Lower 48 would ask how much we pay for gasoline here. I particularly enjoyed telling them the reason why it was so much cheaper here than wherever they live: "We grow it up here."

Now we find ourselves paying nearly a buck a gallon more than any of them and, as far as I can tell, there is only one thing that has changed between the time of my attempts at humor and now when it is no longer a joke.

Sarah Palin bragged while on the VP campaign trail that she took on the oil companies and raised their taxes here in Alaska. Her adoring public, in the Lower 48 and here, cheered this.

Are you cheering now? I honestly think that the oil companies, rather than spreading their new tax burden amongst all of their customers, are sticking it to us here.

Every time I fill up now, I think of this "Palin Tax" and wonder why she should be considered as a heroine to any of us. And why she refuses to do anything about this.

-- Jim O'Toole

Anchorage

Monopoly keeps fuel prices high

Anchorage Daily News (AK) - Sunday, January 4, 2009

I hope the state refineries and their retailers had a prosperous Christmas -- we're currently paying twice as much for gas as many places in the Lower 48. I'm a free marketer. Unfortunately we don't have a free market for gas/fuel oil in Alaska: We have a near-monopoly.

Bush Alaska is practically dying on the vine and the state economy is hurting all over because of this greed. The state should either buy Flint Hills and expand it to distribute gas at cost, or probably the easier thing would be to tax these guys 11 cents for every 10 they're over the national average. Hopefully the state legislators will grow a spine and takes steps to rectify this in the spring.

-- Richard Kent

Homer

Gas issues

Fairbanks Daily News-Miner (AK) - Friday, January 2, 2009

Author: Janice Stables, North Pole
Dec. 29, 2008

To the editor :

I, too, have noticed the current plateau in local gasoline prices . According to a recent article in your pages, there has been a nationwide decline of 73 percent in oil prices since last summer. The national average price for gasoline is \$1.69 per gallon.

I've done the math. Locally, our gasoline runs around \$2.50 per gallon, 48 percent higher than the national average.

We have been told that our prices are based on the cost of gasoline plus the cost of shipping to Alaska (which in itself is questionable since we produce our own oil and gasoline).

I find it hard to believe that shipping costs are more than

3-5 cents per gallon. I find it even harder to believe that shipping costs 81 cents per gallon.

Is the Legislature done with its inquiry into local gasoline prices ? I hope not. Alaskans are still being taken for a ride.

OK, we elected you. Get to work!

Anchorage Daily News (AK) - Saturday, December 27, 2008

Where are our elected leaders? What are they doing? Only last month were they on my doorsteps, on radio, on television, in the newspaper, sending fliers bombarding me begging for my vote. Well, you got it! What are you doing for us now? Have you forgotten who put you in office? I am writing about gas prices. Alaska has the highest gas prices in the nation. Are you kidding? Oil prices are now down to \$25 a barrel. We are still paying more than \$2 a gallon. Or have you not noticed? I will remember you the next time you need my vote.

-- Andrea Smith

Why so high?

Fairbanks Daily News-Miner (AK) - Wednesday, December 24, 2008

Author: Randy Frank, Fairbanks

To the editor :

How many other people have noticed the price plateau reached lately for the cost of a gallon of gas at local stations? As of Dec. 22, 2008, the lowest price per gallon has been stuck at \$2.479 for about two weeks and I have to wonder why. The price of Alaska crude is still sliding; today it was \$33-plus per barrel.

The Web site GasBuddy.com gives good gas prices throughout Canada and the United States. Even smaller communities in the Lower 48 states are seeing gas prices of less than \$2 and there are some places in Utah and Wyoming where the price is below \$1.40 per gallon.

According to GasBuddy, Tesoro is selling gas in Honolulu at \$2.29 per gallon, and that is about the highest price in the city. Gas is selling for about \$1.65 per gallon in Seattle.

This really makes me wonder, and why is diesel now a dollar more than gasoline when it used to be cheaper? I know that the requirement for diesel to be low or ultra-low in sulfur content has something to do with the added cost, but gasoline has to be low-sulfur also. Some price difference can be explained because we use less diesel than gasoline, although refining diesel is easier than making gasoline, so I think that would compensate some for the difference in the amounts used.

I am at a real loss to understand why our gasoline prices are so high relative to the Lower 48 states. I am sure of one thing, though — the refiners would have a real good answer for me. But I don't know that I would believe them. Oh, and today I paid \$1.81 per gallon for No. 2 heating oil. Amazing and amusing.

State refinery could cut gas costs

Anchorage Daily News (AK) - Saturday, December 13, 2008

Yesterday I returned from a visit to Georgia. Regular gasoline was selling for \$1.34 to \$1.45 and diesel was selling for \$2.42 to \$2.53 per gallon. Today **prices** here on the Kenai were \$2.79 for gasoline and \$3.79 for diesel, the highest **prices** in the nation. Why are Alaskans being charged almost double for fuel? Crude oil is selling for less than \$40 a barrel, far less than it was 18 months ago, yet our fuel **prices** have retreated very little and very slowly.

The oil companies or refineries are ripping us off big time and the state seems unable or unwilling to try to stop them. Since the federal government has entered the private sector with the bailout of banks and the insurance industry, why doesn't the state build a refinery and enter into competition with the private refineries? That would certainly help ALL Alaskans and would drive **prices** down to a more comparable level.

-- Quinton Thomas Cable

Kasilof

Highest gas

Fairbanks Daily News-Miner (AK) - Tuesday, December 9, 2008

Author: Tracy Freel, Fairbanks

To the editor :

Alaskans get the shaft! In Alamosa, Colo., gas is \$1.73 a gallon and it has to be trucked a minimum of 200 miles. In Fort Bridger, Wyo., where crude has to be trucked and then gas has to be trucked to retail stations, gas is \$1.65 a gallon. Wildwood, Ga., — \$1.54. Preston, Md., — \$1.66. Garland, Texas, — \$1.53. Fort Collins, Colo., — \$1.47. Roanoke, Va., at Kroger gasoline station No. 3322 — \$1.34.

We here in Fairbanks have a refinery in North Pole with a pipeline feeding it (crude is not trucked one foot), and we still have the highest gas, not to mention heating oil prices , in the nation. As of Nov. 28, gas was \$2.629, and this was the lowest price in town. Is there something wrong with this picture, or is it just me? And all I can say when it goes back up is: Don't blame me, I didn't vote for him.

I'm proud to be an Alaska Republican, and I would like to say "thank you" to Ted Stevens for his years of service. He has my support and always has. Sarah Palin, I think, did a great job in the vice-presidential campaign and as our governor, and she has a strong backbone. She has the support of my family, and go get them and don't back down. Tracy Freel, Fairbanks

Gas price gouging small potatoes

Anchorage Daily News (AK) - Sunday, December 7, 2008

Having worked with the oil companies for 28 years, I know exactly what they are capable of.

Price gouging? Please. That is the least of their sins. It would be swell to see our gas prices go down before I become severely unhappy.

-- Lillian K. Staats

Wasilla

Can't figure high gas prices ? Give 'Tyranny of Oil' a read

Anchorage Daily News (AK) - Wednesday, December 3, 2008

The front page headlines in the Daily News Nov. 22 read "Alaska's high gas prices bewilder state lawmakers." For those citizens who would like an explanation, it can be found in a recent book written by Antonio Juhasz called "Tyranny of Oil".

Revealed is the history of the oil industry and how it has evolved to become the most powerful entity in the world. The industry's vertically integrated structure from well-head to consumer has allowed grossly high profits at the expense of the world's economy and its citizens. It is like a tax.

The oil industry was not able to be what it is today by just shrewd business practices. Their accomplishments have only been possible by political lobbying, influence peddling and campaign contributions at all levels of government. The millions of dollars spent have led to unchallenged corporate mergers, tax breaks, price manipulation, war in Iraq, and pollution at sea, in oilfields and refineries and in the air we breathe. Legislation has been and continues to be passed or defeated that benefits this industry.

Our elected officials have not and will not look after the people's well-being unless we hold them accountable. Who were the major contributors for the finance of the officials you voted for? Who are they indebted to and how will they stay in office? Who pays in the end?

-- Ronn Lund

Fuel disparities

Fairbanks Daily News-Miner (AK) - Tuesday, November 25, 2008

Author: Wayne C. Grieme, Fairbanks

Nov. 22, 2008

To the editor :

Fuel prices in the local area are out of sight but not out of mind. Local diesel prices range from \$3.82 to \$3.99 in the Fairbanks area, unleaded ranges from \$2.79 to \$2.99. Our combined local, state and federal taxes for diesel are 24.4 cents per gallon and for gasoline are 18.4 cents per gallon.

In Montana, diesel prices range from \$2.62 to \$2.72 while unleaded prices range from \$1.80 to \$1.86. Their combined local, state and federal taxes are: diesel — 52.2 cents, and gasoline — 46.2 cents.

In Utah, diesel prices range from \$2.57 to \$2.58 while unleaded prices range from \$1.74 to \$1.82. Their combined local, state and federal taxes are: diesel — 48.9 cents, and gasoline — 42.9 cents.

In Washington, diesel prices range from \$2.66 to \$3.24 while unleaded prices range from \$1.89 to \$2. Their combined local, state and federal taxes are: diesel — 61.9 cents, and gasoline — 55.9 cents.

Why such disparity? When you remove the taxes, it's even worse. I'm afraid to look at the home heating fuel prices .

Is our fuel processed here, or is it hauled in from the Lower 48?

Fuel prices change daily, but they can be verified on flyingj.com. The above prices were based on Nov. 22, 2008.

It's time for Palin to come home and take care of state's business

Anchorage Daily News (AK) - Monday, November 17, 2008

Our governor, Sarah Palin, needs to wake up and realize that the campaign is over. She lost. It is time to come home and do her job. It sounds like she is taking a victory lap by the speech she made at the governors' meetings rather than taking care of business at home. Let's get back on the job and take care of Alaska.

She can start with doing something about the outrageous **prices** of fuel oil. I have a small home in Wasilla, not five miles from her home, and it is costing me \$500 a month to keep it partly warm, and cold weather hasn't hit yet. Fuel oil is \$3.50 a gallon, higher than **gas**, with oil at \$55 a barrel, and lower refining costs. Why is that? Yes, she gave us \$1,200 to help with energy costs. That bought her a few votes I am sure, but I would have preferred a natural **gas** line on my street, or an additional **gas** refinery in our state.

Now that the election is over, governor, what can you do to help Alaska?

-- Bud Bass

Wasilla

Governor, deal with the **gas that powers our vehicles**

Anchorage Daily News (AK) - Saturday, November 15, 2008

I was ready to discontinue my subscription to the paper if this morning (Tuesday) you had continued with your Ladies Home Journal style of journalism with the Palins in the kitchen. Glad to see we are back to news items.

My question for all Alaskans and Gov. Palin and staff, where is the uproar over **gas prices** ? I was in Manhattan two weeks ago, the most expensive place in the country, and **gas** was \$2.72 a gallon. Currently lower yet, with Midwest states being under \$2 a gallon, Seattle at \$2.38 a gallon, San Francisco at \$2.68 a gallon. What's up, Gov? Monopoly, **price fixing after price gouging**?

Where is the interest in what is best for Alaskans? Gov. Palin, you have a job to do. This is affecting every Alaskan. Can this be addressed soon?

-- Gail Sela

Palmer

Gasoline costs

Fairbanks Daily News-Miner (AK) - Thursday, November 13, 2008

Author: Shawna Hildebrand, Fairbanks

Nov. 11, 2008

To the editor :

I am a college student here at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. This is my first semester back in Alaska. Upon moving back, I thought I was leaving the expensive gas prices of Durango, Colo., behind. As it turns out, gas prices are no better here than in most parts of the Lower 48.

Some of the counties down there are currently paying under \$2 per gallon, while we are still paying over \$3.

This is ridiculous, considering that we have resources that we could put to use for our state. Is it really that difficult to lower the prices to match the prices of the rest of our country? Or to at least try?

Alaskans getting gouged for gas

Anchorage Daily News (AK) - Sunday, November 9, 2008

I returned home yesterday from a trip to Texas where I paid \$1.80 a gallon for gas. Our price here when I returned? \$3.20. Alaska gas is now officially more expensive than Hawaii's. Texas gas stations used to gouge residents after tornadoes and government was very swift to act. Why is there so little response here? It's obvious to everyone Alaskans are getting a long-term "gouging" up here.

-- Steve Lane

Wasilla

More regulation for refineries

Anchorage Daily News (AK) - Tuesday, November 4, 2008

The ADN article "Local gas prices still lead nation" (Oct. 24) quoted economist Barry Pulliam as saying Alaska's "two refiners hold not a monopoly but a 'duopoly.' " This is an interesting observation because Chugach Electric and Municipal Light and Power can be considered a "duopoly" and are regulated utilities because they provide essential energy and do not function in a free market as defined in any Economics 101 textbook.

Alaska's two refineries have a natural geographic position that allows them to charge a higher price , which is just lower than what it would cost to truck gasoline to Alaska from Outside. A question that needs to be answered is: Why shouldn't the state address this duopoly as a regulated utility?

-- Rich Sewell

Anchorage

Reverse prices

Fairbanks Daily News-Miner (AK) - Sunday, October 26, 2008

Author: Andreas W. Gerlinger, Fairbanks
Oct. 21, 2008

To the editor :

I had a thought on how to make gas and oil prices fair again in Alaska. The prices for heating oil and gasoline are connected to prices of crude, so why not turn that around and make the crude connected to our price ?

Crude is about \$70 today, yet our pump price looks more like that is around \$100 to \$110.

Gas gouging

Fairbanks Daily News-Miner (AK) - Sunday, October 19, 2008

Author: Michael Lenord , Fairbanks
Oct. 14, 2008

To the editor:

Why isn't everybody up in arms about the price of gasoline? In the state of Washington, gas is \$2.87 and diesel is \$3.29 a gallon. People in Washington pay 36 cents a gallon state tax, we pay nothing.

I must have missed the results of the big state investigation into gas price gouging; anybody out there hear anything? Think about it, if the Washington state gas tax was repealed like Alaska's, they would be paying \$2.51 for gas and \$2.93 for diesel. Am I the only one who thinks something here just isn't right?