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PRESS RELEASE

DUMP THE PUMP

Rising Gasoline Prices Lead to New Ways of Saving

SAN DIEGO, May 20, 2008 – The rising costs of crude oil and jet fuel are causing gasoline prices to reach record breaking highs. Since the beginning of the year, gas prices have increased by almost 20% and according to the Automobile Club of Southern California, the average price of gasoline is about 45 cents higher than this time last year. By the end of the summer, it is predicted that gas prices could possibly be well over \$4 per gallon due to the rising cost of oil and because gasoline is typically more expensive to produce during the summer.

As gas prices continue to rise, San Diegans need to start thinking about alternative ways to cut down on driving expenses in order to save money during such costly times. Whether it means carpooling with co-workers or riding your bike to run errands, the less time spent in the car and on the road means the less money being spent on gasoline. So, next time you decide to get into your car, think about how much money that quick trip will cost you in gas prices and try an alternate way of transportation so that you can save your money.

Debt-Free America offers the following tips and suggestions on how consumers can save money during times of record breaking gas prices:

Take the Bus or the Trolley

Leave the car at home and try utilizing the expansive public transit system that San Diego has to offer. By taking the bus or riding the trolley rather than getting in your car, you not only save money, but you are also helping the environment by keeping less smog-omitting vehicles off the road. Riding the bus also gives you some free time to do things you didn't have time to accomplish. On your stress-free ride to work, for example, you can balance your checkbook or read that book you always wanted to explore.

Carpool

Rather than making the long trip to and from work alone, get together with some of your co-workers and organize a carpool. This will cut down on driving expenses for everyone because you can switch off who drives each week and everyone can help with gas money. Also, using the HOV lanes for two or more person vehicles saves you time from having to stay in bottleneck lanes or waiting for merging-lane lights to change. Also, riding with someone else can make the car ride more enjoyable overall.

Ride Your Bike

As the weather outside is heating up, getting out for some fresh air and sunshine sounds a lot better than sitting in a stuffy car. So next time you decide to go the corner store or run to the bank, why not take your bike for an afternoon ride? Not only is this a good form of exercise, but it will also cut down on money spent towards gas if you leave the car at home. Riding your bike helps you save on fuel and also helps eliminate gym fees. You can also avoid riding in traffic by using secondary roads which are less congested. It might be a few extra miles, but you can enjoy the ride, still get a great work out for your body, and it's a great trade-off. Always remember to wear a helmet.

Best Time to Fill Up

If you do have to take the car out and fill up the tank, try going during early morning hours or late evening hours when it is cooler outside. Gasoline is the densest during these times and gas pumps measure based on volumes of gasoline, not fuel concentration. By filling up during cooler times, you end up getting more for your money.

Car Maintenance

Before you take the car out for a long drive, make sure that all four tires are inflated to maximum capacity so they don't have to work as hard while spinning on the road. Also, you get better gas efficiency if you do not exceed the speed limit and drive with windows only down by 10% so that it does not create any drag from the wind. Keep up with regular tune-ups and oil changes as well to make sure that your car is getting the best possible mileage per gallon. Also, by cleaning out any unwanted materials or junk from your car, you will attain better gas mileage. The less weight in your car the better your car will drive.

Stay In

One of the easiest ways to save money rather than spending it on ever rising gas costs is to simply stay in and do things around the house. Rather than constantly going out to eat or driving downtown on Friday nights, don't drive, stay in and enjoy a peaceful evening at home. This will not only save you money on the gas it takes to go anywhere, but it will also save you from spending lots of money on an expensive nightly outing.

Debt-Free America is a 501(c)3 non-profit, community service organization offering confidential and professional credit counseling, debt management programs, and financial education to consumers nationwide. Debt-Free America is dedicated to providing FREE services to help financially distressed families and individuals effectively manage their personal finances. The Board members and operations staff have a long-term commitment to helping anyone in debt crisis, and even those not in a debt crisis. Debt-Free America has been in the business since 1997 and is now serving over 16,000 clients nationwide. Visit them on the web at www.debtfreeamerica.com.

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