

OCPA FaxLine Report

a public policy information service for members of the Oklahoma Council of Public Affairs, Inc.

Dear OCPA Member:

Wednesday, July 9, 2008

Well, now I've *really* seen everything! In the latest issue of *Time* magazine (July 14, 2008) an article entitled, "10 Things You Can Like About \$4 Gas" talks about the benefits of today's higher gasoline prices -- like the fact that globalized jobs may return home because of the rising costs associated with shipping products to different assembly points and then back to the U.S. The article notes there will also be fewer traffic deaths (up to 1,000 fewer fatalities *a month*) because of people driving slower and driving less. The article is interesting "green" propaganda.

The writer presents the very "politically correct" view that urban sprawl will stall and that as people move closer to their places of employment there will be less (unhealthy) pollution. "About 2,220 lives have already been saved over the past year because of higher gas prices . . ." *Isn't that an interesting figure?* Big bold numbers proclaim there's been a 55% decrease in Ford Motor Company SUV sales in June -- *should we cheer?* The article notes that there has been an 85 million increase in public transit trips in the first quarter of 2008 over the same period in 2007. So there's less traffic to hassle with -- "the number of freeway trips went down 0.7% for every 50 cents increase in gas prices." And because we're driving less we might even qualify for lower car-insurance premiums -- saving as much as 10 to 15%. *Yippee!*

We're told that another positive benefit of \$4 gasoline is that the police will be patrolling more on foot. *Now if only the criminals will do likewise . . .* Shelby, N.C. police officers are already parking their cars for 15 minutes every 2 hours and are not allowed to drive their patrol cars to lunch. The article suggests it's a healthy thing for all of us. If we really want lunch we will just have to walk, or bike -- or better yet, we simply need to "eat out less." The article cheerfully notes that "A permanent \$1 hike in prices may cut obesity 10%, saving thousands of lives and billions of dollars a year . . ."

Then there's this idea: maybe we should go to four-day workweeks. We're told Brevard Community College in Cocoa, Fla. went to four days in the summer of 2007 and saved \$268,000 in energy costs. "Sick leave fell 50% and turnover among the 1,500 person staff dropped 44%." *Well, why stop at four when you can go to three? Heck, maybe we can all stay home and forget about being productive members of society.*

Let's get real. Do you see what is happening here? The very ideas that the environmental movement has been trying to get us to accept for decades, are now presented as beneficial features of \$4 gasoline that we should "like." Remember these are the same people who have a lot to do with the price of gasoline today by blocking drilling in ANWR and in the coastal waters for years, keeping Americans dependent on foreign oil. Through thwarting access to our vast energy resources they lockup America's capitalistic engine creating a dismal scenario for future generations.

Hard-core environmentalists' real problem is with capitalism itself and the prosperity it creates. They *prefer* that America reinvent itself into a third world nation.

Until next time. . . Brett A. Magbee, Vice President for Operations

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