News

Gas prices dip, but drivers' anger remains

BY MATT ROCHELEAU FOR THE SUN CHRONICLE — Tuesday, August 5, 2008 2:42 AM EDT

Gas prices continued to inch down this week at this Hess station Monday at Baker's Corner in Seekonk. (Staff photo by Tom Maguire)

Gas prices are tumbling, but area drivers still aren't happy.

Prices in Massachusetts have fallen an average of 19 cents over the past three weeks, including a 6-cent drop this past week, AAA Southern New England reported Monday.

"It's just pennies on a tank full. It isn't that big of a difference," said Mark Trepanier of Attleboro while stopping for gas.

Trepanier said he spends about $50 a week since buying a 35 mpg Geo Prism about a month ago. His new fuel-efficient vehicle fills up for a bargain compared to his previous 13 mpg Chevy Blazer, which consumed about $200 a week in gas.

"It was costing me a fortune," Trepanier said while fueling up at the Cumberland Farms Gulf station on Pleasant Street, where regular unleaded was priced at $3.83. The weekly statewide survey by AAA found an average price of $3.89 per gallon for self-serve, regular-grade gasoline, one penny above the national average.

The survey shows prices ranging from as low as $3.61 to as high as $4.33 per gallon in the state.

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But Alex Beaton of Attleboro said there still is just one word to describe current gas prices: "Outrageous."

Beaton said his father owns GH Electric in Attleboro, so he understands how businesses are affected when the cost to travel goes up.

"It's not like we can just up our prices to make up the difference," Beaton said.

While filling up the company van, the price meter passed the $75 mark for a full tank and did not stop until it hit $115.

The vehicle is one of eight the company uses, and Beaton's alone traveled from Attleboro to jobs in Falmouth and Duxbury then back to Attleboro on Monday.

Many motorists say gas prices might be falling, but it's not making much of a difference.

"Even though it looks better, we're used to paying $2 a gallon," said Mark Mullins of Attleboro who spends about $40 a week on gas.

June Vesey of Attleboro agreed. "I'm happy it's going down, but I'd like to see it go down more by the holidays so I can afford to buy presents," she said.

So, will gas prices continue to sink below the $4-a-gallon mark?

"It depends. I think it'll go down more if they do the offshore drilling," Mullins said.

Others were less hopeful.

"I think it'll be more - back up to $4," John Bryson of Attleboro said.

Joseph Krewko of Plainville, riding with Anthony Kalalas of North Attleboro, says he's frustrated with expensive gas prices and the slowing economy.

"With the rise in inflation and decrease in real wages, no one (cares) if we eat tonight," Krewko said.

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Auk wrote on Aug 5, 2008 10:04 AM:
" They bled us dry this year, now the price will come down so they can gouge us on home heating costs. "

spookey wrote on Aug 5, 2008 8:28 AM:
" the problem is, that the price of gas goes up so fast, and it takes forever to come back down. people in this area, just don't make that kind of money, for such a drastic increase, in such a short period of time. it effectics everything! home heating oil is the next thing to be concerned about. a lot of new englanders are going to freeze, this winter. outrageous! pay at the pump, and pay at the home heating tank! "

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