

Gas Prices Prompt Drivers To Find Alternatives

Experts Predict Prices Will Rise Even More

■ [CBS News Interactive: Gas Prices](#)

[Dana Kozlov](#)

Reporting

(CBS) CHICAGO Pumped up gas prices are weighing even more heavily on the minds of drivers with word of the pipeline disruption in Alaska.

Experts predict prices will rise even more in upcoming days, which has some people seriously thinking about ditching their cars.

CBS 2's Dana Kozlov reports that with fill-ups costing more than \$30, \$40, even \$50 for many people driving mid-sized cars, frustrations are rising and alternatives are gaining in popularity.

"Whenever you hear gas prices are going to go up even more, it's always an issue of what do I need to cut to make it to the pump the next time," a driver said.

Adding to the pain is the shutdown of BP's Alaskan operations and word that the corroded pipelines hadn't been inspected in 16 years.

BP said it will have to replace most of the 22 miles of so-called transit pipeline at Prudhoe Bay, which produces about 2.6 percent of the nation's daily supply including imports.

"The industry standard of care, normally you would see much more frequent inspections," said Thomas Barrett with the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration.

Bob Malone, chairman of BP America, said that in a worst-case scenario, it could take weeks or months to replace the pipelines. But the company said it will try to put portions of the network back into operation as they are repaired.

"We estimate it could take between 2-3 months to get it back on line," Bruce Lanni, an industry analyst with A.G. Edwards, wrote in a research note. "However, there are no assurances that it will return to current capacity, given the complexities and age of the reservoirs."

Joe Sparano, president of the Western States Petroleum Association, said it's too soon to tell how the shutdown will ultimately affect consumers. "Until we know the full extent of any necessary repairs and how long they might take, it's impossible to predict what the impact might be," he said.

The average U.S. retail price of a gallon of unleaded, regular gasoline was \$3.036 on Monday — near its all-time high of \$3.057, reached Sept. 5 after Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast. Gasoline futures also rose, indicating the market expects further increases.

Even Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-NY) sounded off on the issue while speaking at a union convention in Chicago.

"I think BP should use some of the billions of dollars in excess windfall profits to fix that pipeline without passing on the cost to the rest of us," Clinton said.

But anger over skyrocketing prices has many looking at other options.

One of them in Chicago is I-Go, a car sharing program that now has 2,800 members and dozens of cars throughout the city. It's not-for-profit, and the hourly rate includes the cost of insurance and gas.

"They're like, 'You pay for gas? I can't believe you do that. How can you afford to do that?'" CEO Sharon Feigon said. "But we can afford to do that because we have so many people sharing these cars."

I-Go member Mark Yoon already sees some savings.

"My friends will have me rent the car and drive them somewhere instead of them taking their own car because it actually turns out to be cheaper," Yoon said.

Many drivers are also turning to public transportation, car-pooling, biking and walking to help save some cash.

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