

## Surviving the Rising Cost of Fuel: Be Smart

Most people are looking for ways to beat the high cost of gasoline. With the price at the pump in the neighborhood of \$4 per gallon some are willing to try anything. Be careful; because as gas prices rise, so does the number of scams.

There are some legitimate offers of gas savings from reputable companies.

- Suzuki is offering a Visa debit card for gas with the purchase of a new 2008 or 2009 vehicle through June 30, 2008. The card amounts range from \$320 to \$470 depending on the Suzuki model chosen.
- Chrysler is offering \$2.99 per gallon for three years (based on 12,000 per year) on selected new Chrysler, Dodge and Jeep models purchased before July 7, 2008. The program requires a valid Visa or Mastercard and the difference between the \$2.99 guarantee and the pump price is rebated to the customer.
- Many rental car companies are offering free or discounted gas with the rental of a vehicle.
- Freegashelp.com offers motorist who drive more than 1000 miles per month up to \$2400 per year to display advertising on their cars. Drivers meet qualification criteria including the cosmetic condition of the vehicle and not every car will qualify.
- Many hotels and bed & breakfasts are offering gas cards, discounts or rebates with minimum stays. Check Bedandbreakfast.com, Hotels.com and Bnbfinder.com for offers or check with your travel agent.

Through mid-July Dick's Sporting Goods is offering free gas cards with the purchase of certain Calloway drivers. Check Dickssportinggoods.com for details.

When considering any promotional offer make sure you read the fine print.

### ***Watch Out for Scams***

For every legitimate offer, there are dozens of scams. Scammers can use a variety of approaches; but the general rule of thumb is, "if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is." Moreover, any offer that causes you to spend money you wouldn't otherwise have spent is not a deal at all. Watch out for things like the following:



- **Run your car on water.** There are many devices being sold that claim to increase gas mileage. Such devices come with instructions for installation on your car's engine. Most, if not all, of these devices will cause damage to your engine and void the factory warranty.
- **You've won a free vacation and gas!** Many vacation timeshare operations will lure people with the promise of free vacations or gas. You are generally required to attend an informational meeting after which you'll be asked to sit down with a high pressure salesperson. Then, expect to have to jump through a number of hoops to redeem your "no strings attached" trip or gas card.

Most importantly, never give personal, credit card or bank information over the phone or online. Most reputable companies do not solicit customers in this fashion. Not protecting confidential information will result in identity theft.

### **Don't Forget the Common Sense Approach**

There are plenty of things a person can do to reduce their gas consumption and save money. We tend to forget these as we have grown to take for granted our automotive lifestyle.

- **Walk or ride a bike.** Leave the car at home for your short trips. If you need to pick up a loaf of bread at the corner grocery, make it an opportunity to do something positive for your health (and pocketbook).
- **Use public transportation.** Check bus routes and schedules. You may find that there are bus stops close to both your house and place of employment.
- **Carpool.** Your car has at least one other seat in it; fill it up. Share the ride and split the cost for gas.
- **Keep your car tuned.** Drivers who keep their cars tuned up and observe regular maintenance schedules will enjoy better gas mileage as well as a car that lasts long after the payments are finished.
- **Combine your errands.** Combine all of your errands and shopping into one trip. Another gas saving tip is to plan your route to minimize left turns. Left turns are often made after spending 1-3 light changes waiting in the turn lane.
- **Find the lowest price.** Websites like Gasbuddy.com can help you track down the lowest price per gallon in your area.
- **Check your driving style.** Jackrabbit starts, sudden stops and speeding all waste fuel. Check your behavior behind the wheel and adopt a more fuel friendly driving style.

High gas prices aren't likely to go away anytime soon. We can all survive with a little creativity and diligence.

For help in dealing with the stress caused by rising fuel costs, contact Continuum EAP at: **(402) 476-0186 or (800) 755-7636**  
You may also contact an employee assistance professional at:  
**easpecialist@4continuum.com**

