

Gas prices on the rise make students' hope disappear

Logan Watson

by news editor

Luckily, Junior Robert St. John lives just six minutes away from his job at Sunshine Tree Daycare on 48th and Harrison. But unfortunately it's about a 30 minute drive to school.

His maroon Chrysler New Yorker isn't very efficient when it comes to gas mileage, but it gets him where he needs to go.

"I try to get anything I need done in one trip, and remember all the short cuts."

As much as St. John would like to drive his car to school everyday, with gas prices being so high, that probably won't happen. He says he'll more than likely take the bus most days and drive when he needs to.

"I don't even want to drive anymore; the gas prices are just too high."

In 2007 they gas prices went up about seven percent. Experts say that by 2008, gas should go down by another two percent.

"Gas prices are insane, but I figured they'd be this high by the time I could drive," Junior Joleigh Shuster said.

Like St. John, Shuster doesn't plan on

driving to school much, if at all this school year. Her guardian lives right next to her bus stop, which is about a 15 minute drive from her house.

"I'm going to drive to my guardian's house, park my car, and just get on the bus from there" Shuster said.

Teens are going to have it pretty hard this year when it comes to paying for gas, and other bills. A new law, LB 415, goes into affect January 1, 2008. For the first six months after drivers get their Provisional Operators Permit, they can only have one passenger who's not family in your car at once. This means for the first six months drivers have their license, no carpooling!

Junior Kayla Klepper is not a big fan of this new law. She's a cheerleader at North, and gives rides to anybody who needs one for cheer practice.

"It's basically the job of the juniors and

seniors to give everybody rides," Klepper said.

So with the 42 girls on the squad, and the new law, finding rides to practice will probably be a bit harder.

According to the Nebraska Department of Revenue, in 2006 Nebraskans used less gas in the past four years. This causes a major decrease in gas revenue. Most of the money we pay to fill up our tanks goes to the Highway Trust

Fund, which rebuilds and fixes our states roads. The government says that by 2009, about \$4.3 billion dollars will be lost for the highway trust fund.

Gas prices are getting outrageous but there are some websites that can help.

Two web sites that compare gas prices throughout the Omaha area are Gasprices.mapquest.com and Omahagasprices.com. They are the easiest and fastest sites when it comes to finding cheap and affordable gas. All you have to do is type in your zip code!

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New law targets teenage drivers

Rachel George

by news editor

"Who wants their parents driving them to school their junior or senior year?" Alisa Moore, North High junior asked.

A new law going into effect January 1, 2008, LB415, targets these student drivers. This law hopes to crack down on distracted drivers - it informs teens seem to be distracted more easily than adults.

It's a law for those ages 16-18, and includes those who have their POP (provisional operators permit - which you get after your permit and before your actual license), learner's permit, or school permit.

The law states that for the first six months a teenager has their POP, only one other teen passenger is allowed in their car (besides family).

LB415 requires that teenagers do not use their cell phones while driving - this includes talking and texting.

The National Association of Mutual Insurance Companies said three out of four

Americans own a cell phone. At any daylight moment, up to 974,000 cars are being driven by a cell phone user

Before it wasn't stated how long you must have your permit before getting your POP but this

law requires it be held for at least six months - including at least 10 hours of driving at night.

"I think it's a really good rule," Ashley Nelson, North High senior said. "This summer I noticed a lot of teenage drinking and driving, usually with a bunch of people in the car."

"A lot of teens take driving for granted, giving the rest of us teens a bad reputation," Nelson said.

"A few of my friends thought it'd be fun to come and pick me up while almost everyone in the car was already drunk. I was

so mad, but later that night the cops stopped them, and most of them got MIP's (minor in possession). I'm just glad I wasn't with them at the time," Nelson said."

Nelson's cousin was drinking with her friends when they got into a car. They ended up in an accident, resulting in one girl's arm being seriously injured.

Other students think a little differently. Most students interviewed weren't too concerned about obeying the new law. The rules in LB415 are all secondary offenses, meaning you must be pulled over for something else - such as speeding - to be ticketed for them.

"I think it's dumb. People will still have more than one person in the car anyway," Moore said. "You could just say they're family, how will anybody know?"

"A lot of teens take driving for granted, giving the rest of us teens a bad reputation."