



a report to cochise county from

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Gasohol: A Cochise Future?

It's no secret that the United States faces more rough going in this decade on the energy front. We now import more than 40 percent of all the oil we burn. The price of that oil has skyrocketed in the last few years and the smiling ministers of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) promise only that we'll see more of the same.

When we pay billions of dollars every year for imported oil, that's money sent overseas. The strain of that kind of dollar export spells inflation. It hurts our economy, our country and every American.

That's all a familiar tale. What then, may be expected for the future?

The future means changes in our energy habits. To be certain, what our future holds is a healthy dose of transition. I think we can get through it, probably with a good, strong combination of alternative energy sources. Rather than relying almost entirely on one source of energy, as has been the case for so long, I expect we'll end up using some of a lot of different sources.

Nuclear power will be one source. But it's clear by now that nuclear won't be the cure-all, solve-all that we believed when President Eisenhower announced his "Atoms for Peace" plan back in the 1950s.

I expect we'll find our energy solution in a combination of solutions. We'll find part of the answer in nuclear, part of it in wind power, part of it in solar power, part in biomass (the burning of garbage in generating plants), part in a resurgence of hydroelectric power, and, to give us the breathing time we need, part of it in gasohol.

Gasohol isn't cheap. The price difference today between a gallon of gasohol and a gallon of gasoline doesn't amount to much. But as OPEC continues to increase the price of oil, gasohol may become competitive soon.

But price is not really the most important factor. Gasohol can be an important conservation tool. Because it's a mixture of alcohol and gasoline, it will allow us to stretch our existing gasoline supplies. It can mean that this country can reduce oil imports by thousands of barrels a day. And it holds the potential to help our farmers, like those in Cochise County. It can offer a new "high-demand" market for grain crops because they are necessary in the manufacture of alcohol.

Burning less oil means fewer dollars go overseas. That's good for our economy, and our farmers, an absolutely vital group of people, can help us -- and be helped -- in a direct, positive and profitable way.

There really is no question that gasohol will work, because it already is working. (Brazil, in fact, has taken all of this a step further: that country is shooting for an all-alcohol vehicle fuel. The problem that government is facing is not scarcity or lack of cooperation. Brazil's farmers have discovered that alcohol is so valuable that it makes a better export product.)

The development of gasohol should rate a high priority. It's an effort that deserves a solid commitment and all the help necessary to push it forward.

There have been indications of interest in gasohol production in Cochise County within the last year, and that's encouraging. Such interest has my support. Local initiative is the key to the kinds of demonstration projects we'll be seeing throughout the United States in the next few years. If the people of Cochise County decide to pursue that course, they deserve help and support from Washington.

As is the case with any new technology, gasohol is not without problems. But I'm confident they will be overcome. That will spell good news for the United States, and for the people of Cochise County.

Fort Huachuca

Fort Huachuca has a long and distinguished history in the opening of the American West and in the defense of the United States in later conflicts.

The post is responsible not only for some important Army missions, but also for a healthy piece of the economy in the southernmost part of Southern Arizona.

Just as the Arizona climate has always been a critical factor for aviation, so it is for Fort Huachuca's Strategic Communications Command. The clear skies, unpolluted environment and lack of electrical interference of the kind that might be found closer

to large urban areas are among the important factors that led the Army to locate its communications command in the southern part of Arizona.

Fort Huachuca is important to the defense of the United States, and to the economy of Cochise County.

Aside from the post's sizeable military contingent, it is the employer of hundreds of civilians who work at dozens and dozens of important jobs. It has become fashionable in some quarters of late to take advantage of these workers, to characterize them as unproductive bureaucrats who contribute little or nothing to our country or to our overall military posture generally. That isn't fair and it isn't right. These employees deserve the same measure of fairness afforded every American who holds a job, and Congress must see that they get that consideration.

Fort Huachuca, and the people who supply the manpower to run it, are important. Since the end of World War II, the post has grown slowly but steadily as a center for some key and specialized Army missions.

It is an installation that deserves continued strong support from the Congress.

Helping the Elderly

It seems to me that one of the measures of an advanced society is how that society treats its older citizens.

In legend and in folklore, we often venerate our elderly. We point to them with pride as examples of wise and seasoned people whose rich experiences and long life has endowed them with a knowledge that can and does benefit new generations.

In children's books, old folks appear as happy, rosy-cheeked storytellers with few worries other than getting across the next message with a moral.

None of these storybook old folks have any visible cares or worries. None of them have any visible wants. None of them become ill or have to worry about paying the rent or about the tough choices so many face every few days at the supermarket.

It might be nice if our elderly were afforded that kind of existence in real life. Unfortunately, the record all too frequently points to an opposite case. There has been progress, but much hardship still exists. In plain language, we haven't always treated our elderly very well in this country.

We are making headway. One piece of this progress is the Cochise County Senior Nutrition Project, sponsored by Catholic Social Services of Southern Arizona.

Under this program, senior citizens in Huachuca City, Bisbee, Douglas, Sierra Vista, Benson, Wilcox and Tombstone are the beneficiaries of 450 meals served each day in these seven Cochise County communities. And if an elderly person is ill or disabled, meals can be delivered to private homes.

Since the start of this project in 1973, it has become one of the more successful local programs. Participants, under the law, must be at least 60 years old and meet some minimum income and other requirements.

More importantly, the program has the strong support of the communities it serves -- and I think that says a lot about Southern Arizona in general. It says that while Arizonans are tough and sturdy and independent, they also are a compassionate lot who get behind something full tilt when they believe it makes good sense. For that, all of Cochise County may be justly proud.



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