

Energy Crisis

No Gas Today, Say Gas Station Owners

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Gas stations in Santa Cruz County and across the nation were crowded Saturday on the eve of expected widespread station closings today, and motorists found that gas prices at many stations had gone up two to four cents a gallon — reaching a high of 53.9 cents for premium at some stations.

Standard Oil Company of California had not raised its prices this weekend, but local Standard dealers were saying a price increase is imminent, and a spokesman for the company told the Associated Press, "we never announce these things in advance."

Nationwide, a large percentage of stations are expected to begin voluntary Sunday closings as requested by President Nixon and also as a measure to keep the allocation of diminishing supplies of fuel confined to the local level.

"If we go to enforced rationing by the government, as it was done during the Second World War, there will be a 10 per cent unemployment factor," claims Bob DiCiano, a Standard station owner and president of the Santa Cruz Chapter of the Pacific Coast Service Station Dealers Association.

DiCiano believes if all dealers cooperate with the Sunday closing, the stations can continue to keep the allocation of gas at the local level and avoid rationing to customers by the government.

"Any SOB who stays open on Sunday is a traitor," DiCiano states, "and any driver who goes into a station for gas on Sunday deserves to be rationed."

An Associated Press survey of trade groups and government agencies in all 50 states indicated at least three - quarters of the stations plan to comply.

The Santa Cruz dealers association's "muscle" is shown in

its membership which counts about 60 of the county's 75 gas stations.

Saturday, a number of the local stations were reporting they were in short-supply, but many were expecting early - month deliveries at the beginning of the week.

The 53.9 cents per gallon price was reported from Shell stations which were selling regular gas for 48.9 cents.

An attendant at the station said the Shell Company had raised its prices 3.2 cents a gallon and that taxes had brought the increase up to about four cents.

According to the Associated Press, Shell was up nationally by 3.2. Atlantic Richfield and Union Oil were up two cents, and Richfield had raised its diesel fuel 4.5 cents a gallon.

Ashland Oil Inc. and Union, according to the AP, were to raise the price of heating oil by about two cents a gallon retail.

Exxon Corp., according to the AP, had not raised prices yet, but corporation chairman M. A. Wright warned President Nixon in a telegram:

"If emergency actions are not taken to reduce oil consumption immediately, the cumulative impact of a continued Middle East oil embargo will reach such proportions that the nation will experience drastic shortages in the first quarter of 1974."

DiCiano warned, "The government has talked of putting on a 40 cent increase as a surcharge. If this is done it will have a drastic effect on the average wage earner and the poorer people of our country."

"If they'll only allow us to allocate the gas locally, even if it's a 40 per cent cutback, we can get everyone through the shortage without a major recession," he states.

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Weather

MONTEREY BAY AREA — Clearing. Mostly fair today and Monday. Cooler nights. Lows tonight in mid 30s to mid 40s. Highs both days in 50s. Small craft advisory for northwest wind 12 to 25 mph.

Temperatures for 24 - hour period ending at 5 p.m. Saturday: High 59, Low 40. Rainfall: 1.10 inches.