

Energy Crisis

20 Per Cent Cut Facing S.C. Drivers

Local gasoline dealers are confirming reports of a 20 per cent cutback at the pumps starting Feb. 1.

John Del Conte of University Shell Service, 745 Ocean, says Shell dealers in Santa Cruz County will be allocated one - fifth less gas for the month of February, which begins Friday.

But Bob DiCiano, owner of Bob's Chevron Service at 805 Ocean, thinks it could be even worse.

"We may be getting 20 per cent less than 1972 levels, which could in fact mean as much as a 40 per cent reduction," DiCiano said Saturday.

He closed his station at 2:30 p.m. Saturday after heavy demand all morning had almost exhausted his supply. DiCiano said four nearby stations were closed for the day because they had run out of gas.

Energy "czar" William E. Simon, who declined last week to endorse proposals for a crude oil price rollback, testified Friday before the Senate committee investigating the oil industry that predictions of a 20 per cent gasoline shortage are "becoming only too accurate."

DiCiano says he doesn't think the federal government and the oil companies are dealing straight with the American people, however. "In my opinion, the government pulled a big boo - boo, and they're making us the scapegoats — saying we're energy pigs," stated DiCiano.

DiCiano cites figures that minimize the effect of the Arab oil embargo and says the oil companies are getting fat on it.

"The federal government got us into this mess, and now they're coming to us to solve it," DiCiano stated. He predicts the shortage, whether "real" or managed, will last at least through April.