

Gas Is Hard To Find In Santa Cruz County

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If you expect to get gassed up in Santa Cruz County today, it may take as much gas to find a station that is open as the station has gas to sell.

Saturday, during the first day of a three-day close-down of independently owned stations in northern California, the stations that remained open—those that are company owned and consignee stations—were overrun with customers.

At all stations that were checked, it was found that business had tripled, and many of the stations were out of regular gas, and a number expected they would not see it through the weekend.

Of the independently-owned stations that were closing to protest the price rollbacks of Phase 4 economics, it was estimated that over 90 per cent of them had closed and will not be open until Tuesday morning.

What it all amounts to is that 50 per cent or more of the service stations in the county are closed for three days, and the remaining half of the stations are being drained dry by the customer load,

which is going out of its way—it has to—to really load up.

Bob Vollmer, of the Phillips VanGuard Station on Ocean Street, a company owned station, said he pumped three times the amount of gasoline in less hours Saturday than he usually has done. He closed at 5 p.m.

He said his regular tanks were drained, and that Sunday between 1 and 9 p.m., he would only have ethyl for sale as long as it held out.

The USA station on 41st Avenue had as many as 18 cars lined up at its six pumps and the telephone was constantly ringing with people asking if the station was open and had gas to sell.

Vollmer, when asked how people were reacting when they pulled up and he said there was gas to sell, answered, "They're acting relieved."

Bob DiCiano, of Bob's Chevron in Santa Cruz, one of the many stations closed to point out the impact of the price squeeze on retail gasoline sales, said, "We did not decide to close to cause a hardship on our customers."

"We announced the action we were going to take on Thursday and

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Cars line up to fill-up at the Shell Station at Ocean and Water Streets on Saturday, the first day of the 72-hour close-down of independently-owned stations. The independents are closing this weekend, through Monday, to protest the price squeeze of

the Phase 4 price rollbacks. Those company-owned stations that stayed open were doing a triple sales business and running low on gas.

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Weather

MONTEREY BAY AREA — Fair today through Monday. Low tonight in 50s. Highs today in mid 60s to low 70s and Monday in mid 70s near coast and 70s inland. West to, northwest wind 10 to 20 mph afternoons.

Temperatures for 24 hour period ending at 8 a.m. Saturday: High 78, Low 45; for period ending at 5 p.m. Saturday: High 73, Low 46.

Agnew To Try To Block Probe

WASHINGTON (AP) — Vice Agnew has denied allegations

Energy Crisis



With many Northern California service station operators shutting down over the weekend, scenes like the one at bottom of photo in Martinez were common Friday as motorists rushed to fill their gas tanks. Meanwhile, in Salinas, these youngsters at a nursery school had heard about the gas protest from their parents and set up their own play service station—with a line of tricycles waiting at the pump, in top of photo. (AP Wirephoto)

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we stayed open on Friday to give people time to fill up their tanks.

"I know that a great many of my customers did—I pumped a tremendous 3,400 gallons of gas Friday.

"We have to bring it home to the people and the government that the price controls are squeezing the independently owned stations out of business.

"When the gas rationing began, we raised our prices two cents; we had to do this to compensate for the loss of business because of the controls.

"We know now that we will be cut back at least one-fourth within three months when the refineries switch to making heating oil, and we are going to have to be let to raise prices to compensate for this, or go out of business," DiCiano explained.

The close-down was being felt all over northern and central California, according to the Associated Press, and there were numbers of stranded motorists, traffic jams at service stations and flaring tempers when motorists were turned away from stations.

In Santa Cruz no incidents of tempers were reported, but a number of stations reported an increase in walk-in customers.

Also, in Santa Cruz as in the rest of the state when the stations close, there has been a great increase in the purchase of gas cans.

A Disco Store manager said Saturday that the store had not sold all of its gas cans, but that sales were way up.

He said, "What really came as a surprise is that our sale of lock-type gas caps has shot way up."

According to AP, the California Highway Patrol reported spot-

ting numerous motorists stranded without gas on major and minor highways and received hundreds of pleas from others asking locations of open stations.

Vollmer, of the Santa Cruz Phillips station, said he was surprised at the number of drivers who told him they were going on long trips after finding his station open and being able to fill up with gas. He said that a few of them made this decision after he provided them with a map showing the Phillips VanGuard stations that will remain open across the state this weekend.

The AP reported the California Automobile Association was advising motorists to avoid long automobile trips and urged special precautions if such trips were necessary.

"Virtually all stations in Northern and Central California will be affected by Monday," the AAA said. "Those that do remain open can be expected to ration gas."

Tempers flared in San Jose, the AP reported, after a service station operator told a customer he was closing.

The customer threw a tire wrench at the operator and the CHP was called to protect the station while it was closed.

Bob Moore, executive secretary of the California Service Station Dealers Assn., said that at least half of his 5,000 member stations in Northern and Central California would shut down.

DiCiano said that he counted the stations in the City of Santa Cruz, and that over 90 per cent of the independently owned stations were closed.