

Gas prices

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al's office has issued 36 gas stations in Oregon with Civil Investigation Demands, which will require the stations to answer questions about why their prices rose so much after Sept. 11. Most of the stations, she said, have been in rural areas or small towns where drivers have few options as to where to buy gas.

There was legitimate concern among oil companies, providers (called jobbers) and station owners as to what the gas supply situation would be immediately following the terrorist attacks, said Brent DeHart,

spokesman for the Oregon Gasoline Dealers Association. For about two days following the attack, several stations either came close to running out of gas or did run out, he said.

"Many dealers raised prices by about four cents a gallon so they wouldn't completely run out," DeHart said. "As soon as the stations were replenished, prices went back down."

The federal government did shut off a majority of the gas pipelines throughout the nation as a safety precaution, said Oregon Petroleum Marketers Association Spokesman Steve O'Toole. Once the lines opened again, he said, stations did not have to worry

about their supply.

O'Toole also said that prices had been going up in the gas market for at least two weeks before the attacks, so much of the price increases were not due to stations panicking over the event.

People also began to panic about the possibility of the gas supply running out if, in response to the terrorist actions, the United States attacked the Middle East, said AAA Spokesman Elliott Eki.

"People were showing up at gas stations with 55 gallon drums and wanting to fill them with gas," Eki said.

Gas prices are now back to normal, if not lower than what they

were before the crisis, Eki said, with Oregon's average price at \$1.77 a gallon.

"The stations and providers had to deal with the demand issue before they could lower their prices again," Eki said. "But now, the price for crude oil is the lowest it's been in the past two years, and with the reduction in airline flights, more oil is available for gasoline."

So those who have their prices above \$2 a gallon for unleaded regular gas at this time are charging too much, O'Toole said.

Brian Doherty, the retained advocate for the Western States Petroleum Association, said few of the stations are owned by the actual

company whose name appears on their sign. Most companies, such as Chevron, Texaco and Shell, are suppliers to individual stations and deliver their oil through independent providers. He said the stations who are speculating the prices are not necessarily reflecting the wholesale price of the oil.

Spokesmen for the OPMA, OGD and the WSPA all said they have begun and will continue to work with the Attorney General's office to stop price speculation in the gasoline market.

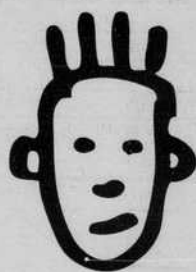
Lindsay Buchele is the community editor for the Oregon Daily Emerald. She can be reached at lindsaybucheledailyemerald.com.

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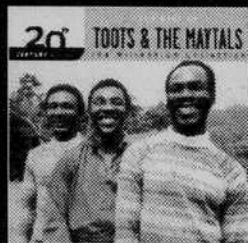
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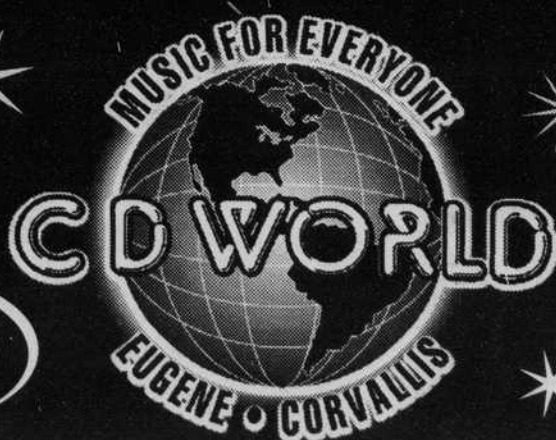
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