

ODA's motor fuel quality inspectors find job a gas

The Oregon Dept. of Agriculture's (ODA) inspection of motor fuel quality and quantity takes on new importance as motorists experience some of the highest prices for gasoline in state history.

Buying and receiving the correct level of octane in motor fuel can either save or cost significant dollars and cents depending upon whether the motorist gets what they are supposed to.

"It seems our inspection is more critical now as people start seeing the price of gasoline pushing up towards two dollars a gallon," said George Shefcheck, administrator of ODA's Measurement Standards Division.

"People become more aware when they have to pull out their wallet and pay \$17.50 for a fill up instead of the \$12 they are accustomed to," said Shefcheck.

ODA's efforts are designed to make sure motorists get what they think they are paying for - good gasoline. Inspectors routinely conduct field screenings from nearly 28,000 fuel dispensers throughout Oregon, making sure octane readings match the levels posted at the pump. They also measure the amount of water in storage tanks to make sure it does not exceed state standards. Measurement Standards Division inspectors will also continue to ensure motor fuel quantity by checking the pumps themselves - making sure the meters are accurately dispensing the fuel.

With a lot more money at stake for the consumer, officials are pleased that Oregon even has motor fuel quality inspection. That wasn't the case as recently as five years ago. Shefcheck says part of the value of the inspection program has been deterrence. The industry is being more careful to be accurate in what they offer.

"When the program first began, we were looking at about a 3 percent error rate in octane rating," said Shefcheck, referring to those cases when the gasoline screenings conducted by ODA inspectors did not meet the octane rating standard listed at the pump.

"This was more often inadvertent rather than intentional. Right now, the error rate is far less than one half of one percent. We think that's largely because of the awareness we've created on the part of the operators of fueling stations and service stations," he said.

ODA inspectors have also taken a good hard look at water in gasoline. A long stick is used to probe the depths of the underground storage tank. A special paste is spread at the end of the stick which is then lowered into the tank. If the

paste turns from cream colored to pink, water is present. More than two inches of water in the bottom of the tank is a problem that needs to be fixed by the station owner. Water levels cannot exceed a quarter inch for gasoline-alcohol blends and aviation gasoline. But again, the actual inspections this past year indicate no widespread problems.

Of the 2,663 motor fuel inspections performed last year in Oregon, only seven failed to meet the standards - a statistic that is welcome news to all Oregon motorists.

"People are generally getting what they pay for whether they buy 87,89, or 92 octane gasoline," said Shefcheck.

Some motorists, however, may be making the wrong decision about what level of octane should be purchased.

"Some people buy a higher octane when they don't need to, which means they are paying anywhere from 10 to 20 cents a gallon more for a grade of gasoline they don't need," said Shefcheck.

"Their automobile owner's manual will list what octane level the vehicle will run on. In most cases, it is 87. However, in some cases, they may be required to increase the octane," said Shefcheck.

Listening to the engine will give you the easiest clue. If it starts pinging or rattling, it could be that the octane level needs to be increased. If that doesn't help, it may be time for an engine tune up.

It is tempting to purchase the cheaper gasoline that has the lowest octane rating, just to save a few dollars. But that can be risky. The ping is a symptom of an engine that could be severely damaged if given a steady diet of lower octane when it actually requires a higher rating.

Saving buck at the pump is understandable. But there are other steps motorists can take that can lower the fuel costs. Most include making efficient use of every gallon in the tank.

"Make sure you have a clean air filter, watch how you accelerate the engine, take a look at all your driving habits," said Shefcheck.

"Many of these factors can make a big difference in how many miles per gallon your car is going to deliver," said Shefcheck.

ODA's Measurement Standards Division has produced a brochure entitled "Know the Facts About Gasoline Octane" that is available to interested motorists. Consumer complaint forms on motor fuel in Oregon or additional information on the department's inspection program can be found online at <oda.stste.oe.us.ms> or by phoning 503-986-4670.

Three dogs 'poisoned' by antifreeze

After her three dogs became extremely ill early this week, and may not survive, a Selma resident is urging that people watch out for potential poisoners.

Sharon Blunt, of Reeves Creek Road, said that bowls of dog food mixed with antifreeze were found after the dogs began convulsing and vomiting.

The animals -- "Chloe," "Ruby," and "Duchess," may not live, said Blunt. "It was the most horrible thing I've ever seen," she said, in recalling the situation.

The dogs are being treated at Dr. Joe's Pet Hospital in Cave Junction. Antifreeze, which dogs find attractive, attacks their kidneys and crystallizes, said Blunt.

"It's lethal," she said.

Neighbors were as upset as her after the "poison" was found. It seems that a strange vehicle was seen in the area Saturday night, and that those in it might be responsible.

"There are some sick people around here," said Blunt.

The Josephine County Sheriff's Office is investigating the incident.



SUCKER CREEK WALK - Ecologist Rich Nawa (on crutches) led a group of a dozen people on a Siskiyou Project annual steelhead spawning hike and nature tour on Sunday, March 30. They watched for fish on portions of Sucker Creek near Grayback Campground. Hikers also identified trees, mushrooms, flowers and bushes. (Photo left) One woman found an animal skull, perhaps that of a dog or a coyote, with a bullet hole in it. Nawa will lead another steelhead hike on Saturday, April 12. Those interested are to meet at the Illinois Valley Visitor Center. For information - 592-4459.

Oregon grass aims at China

Trade mission indicates potential for state as exporter

A quick, whirlwind trade trip to China recently gave Gov. Kulongoski his first opportunity to promote Oregon and its products to a country that holds tremendous potential as an export customer.

The governor and other state officials hope to use the trade mission as a springboard for Oregon in its efforts to help China deal with massive urbanization issues. As a result, Oregon grass seed might be putting a lot more green into the Chinese urban landscape.

"It was an excellent trip," said Katy Coba, director of the Oregon Dept. of Agriculture, who accompanied the governor in China.

"We think there are some great opportunities for Oregon grass seed, but we also explored opportunities for Oregon nursery products. Because

Oregon grass seed already has such a good reputation in China, it has the potential to open the door for other Oregon agricultural products."

During 2001, Oregon sold about 12 million pounds of grass seed to China. Industry officials are hoping to increase that to as much as 50 million pounds by the time the 2008 Olympics are held in Beijing.

Crammed into two days of meetings, part of the Oregon trade delegation successfully held a technical seminar targeted at municipal officials in China as well as Chinese university officials who have been working with Oregon's grass seed industry for several years.

The seminar was designed to teach the Chinese the basics of grass - how to grow it, how to maintain it, and how to use it for beautification purposes in an urban setting.

FORE!!

The Illinois Valley Golf Club is preparing for its 2003 Men's Twilight League play beginning Monday, April 21 & Wednesday April 23. Those interested in participating need a partner & sponsor and can sign up at the course. Phone 592-3151 for information

A wise man will make more opportunities than he finds. - Francis Bacon -

Make your home fire safe before the next fire season!

Fire Fuel Reduction
Land Clearing
Thinning
Forestry

592-3143

Taking joy in life is a woman's best cosmetic. - Rosalind Russell -

IVHS Activities Calendar
Brought to you by the folks at

592-3556
Cave Jct.
469-7545
Brookings/
Harbor
471-RIVR

Blame us if your life goes to Pappa!

- THURSDAY, APRIL 3

 - *Spring sports pictures 3 p.m.

FRIDAY, APRIL 4

 - *No classes - Clerical day
 - *Boys golf at Glide 10 a.m.

SATURDAY, APRIL 5

 - *Girls softball vs. Mazama here - noon double header
 - *Boys baseball at Mazama 3 p.m. - double header
 - *Track at Glide - 10 a.m.
 - *Drama production - 7 p.m.

MONDAY, APRIL 7

 - *No classes

TUESDAY, APRIL 8

 - *Girls softball at North Valley - 4:30 p.m.
 - *Boys baseball vs. North Valley - here - 4:30 p.m.
 - *Track - here - 3:30 p.m.
 - *Girls golf at St. Meadows noon
 - *Fishwatch - lunch
 - *Key Club meeting - lunch

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 9

 - *Boys baseball vs. Brookings - here - 4:30 p.m.
 - *OSSOM meeting
 - *ROTC - port - lunch

202 S.
Redwood Hwy.
592-5358

COUNTRY STORE

Taylor's Own Lean Pork Sausage

Frozen 1# packages - Bulk... \$1.29 lb. reg. \$1.69

*Original *Sage *Hot & Sage *Xtra Mild

***** April Events: 6-9 p.m. *****

- *Friday & Saturday, April 4 & 5
- Dale & the Siskiyou Mountain 'Cow' Boys Dinner Special:
- Marinated BBQ Albacore - \$8.95
- *For Art Walk - Friday, April 11 - Mike Selfridge
- *Saturday, April 12 - Buck Harms
- *Friday, April 18 - Christian Rock on Good Friday with Common Ground
- *Saturday, April 19 - Local Southern Gospel Trio 'Generations' (Hoskins' Girls)
- *Thursday UBA-Star open mic with Jake Thompson

DINNERS SERVED

Thursday, Friday & Saturday - 5 p.m.

Prepared by Chef Michael Smith

SERVING BEER AND WINE
ESPRESSO
Open for breakfast 6 a.m.

