

Lack Of Highway Funds May Increase Gas Taxes

By PAUL W. HARVEY JR.
SALEM (AP) — Oregon's motorists either will have to pay more gasoline taxes, or have their road building cut in half.

The present 6-cent a gallon state gasoline tax would have to be increased by 2 cents, if the State Highway Commission is to carry on its "minimum" program for the next 15 years.

And with President Eisenhower's 10-year \$9 billion highway construction program in the works, it probably will take another 2 cents to finance that.

That makes another 4 cents that the motorists in Oregon might have to plunk up.

By next June, Oregon will have spent the last of the 72 million dollars worth of bonds that were issued to take care of emergency needs. This was a five-year program that allowed the Highway Commission to double the rate of construction.

When the bond money is gone, Oregon can't issue more bonds, because it's reached the limit.

With the aid of these bonds, the state is spending 42 million for new roads this year, and 43 million next year.

If the gas tax isn't increased, the amount of money available for construction would be only 22 million a year.

But with an extra 2 cents added to the gas tax, the amount would be boosted to 39 million a year. The commission says that would enable us to hold our own.

But it wouldn't provide for increases in future traffic. W. C. Williams, acting state highway engineer, says the Highway Commission won't ask the Legislature to increase the gas tax. It will just provide the facts, and let the lawmakers draw their own conclusion.

Under the bond program, two highways are being built so they will be adequate 10 years from now. They are the Pacific Highway from Portland to Canyonville, and the Columbia River route from Portland to Pendleton.

But President Eisenhower, under his 10-year program, proposes that we have an interstate system that will be adequate for 20 years.

This means that the 17,000 miles of main inter-regional highways in the United States would be four-laned and with limited access. The only highways in Oregon under this program would be the Pacific and Columbia River-Old Oregon Trail routes. Money also would be available for improvement of other roads.

Of this 17,000-mile network, 92 per cent of it would be moved to new locations.

Gov. Paul L. Patterson is one of a committee of seven governors that is trying to work out the details. The committee will meet in Chicago Nov. 9, and then will tell the President how the states feel it should be done.

The worst problem is financing it. Some governors want Uncle Sam to pay the bill, but Gov. Patterson says "the states would lose their sovereignty if we let that happen."

The states aren't exactly flush, either. Oregon would find it hard to finance that kind of a program. Converting our two major highways into four-lane routes would be extremely costly.

It's a cinch that the states will be asked to add 2 cents to their gas taxes to help finance the Eisenhower road plan. But this would produce less than half of the \$9 billion dollars.

The federal government has a 2-cent gas tax, and it's now returning this money to the states. Some governors want the government to quit levying the tax. This would benefit the heavily populated states, but would handicap the smaller states, like Oregon.

Oregon gets more road funds from the government than it could collect if it levied the federal tax itself.

Gov. Patterson and the Highway Commission disagree with many Easterners who think toll roads are the final answer. They say that toll roads pay off only near big population centers, and that it's an expensive way to build. Interest rates are high, and it also costs money to man the toll gates.

But no matter how the new Oregon and federal road programs are financed, the motorist will have to pay for it.



"YOU MEAN YOU CAN TELL ME THAT?" queried Suzie, when, on a tour of United Fund agencies, she talked to Ralph Moon about health agencies such as the cancer, multiple sclerosis and arthritis and rheumatism foundations. Moon, laboratory technician at Klamath Valley Hospital, explained that study of slides under a microscope is only one phase of research to find possible cures and preventives for dreaded diseases. Research, clinics and rehabilitation offer an answer to local victims of these diseases because Klamath County-donated dollars help make them available.

Guards Foil Escape Try

WALLA WALLA, Wash. (AP) — Gunfire ended another attempt to scale prison walls Wednesday night and one of two penitentiary inmates involved in the escape effort was shot and seriously wounded.

Prison officials said Verlin Barrett, 26, serving time for a Pierce County burglary conviction, was struck in the hip and shoulder with buckshot and creased across the stomach with a rifle bullet.

Robert McDonald, 24, convicted of burglary in Okanogan County, was captured at the base of the prison wall inside the grounds.

Prison officers said the pair attempted a break shortly after they had finished work on the night shift in the prison canteen.

The two men crawled about 50 feet to the north section of the wall and hooked a makeshift ladder, constructed of a section of pipe with a hook on the end, over the wall.

A tower guard spotted Barrett as he started up the ladder and opened fire, officials said. McDonald then surrendered.

It was the fourth prison break attempt in less than a month and the second in which a crude ladder was used. Two inmates using a ladder made of pipe and a hook went over the wall Monday night but were caught the next day by three hunters.

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Nixon Denies Radio Remark

VAN NUYS, Calif. (AP) — Thousands of television viewers watching Vice President Nixon deliver a political speech Wednesday night heard at its conclusion the words: "Who the hell did that?"

Immediately telephone switchboards at station KTTV and Los Angeles newspapers were swamped with persons demanding to know if Nixon uttered the sentence.

"It wasn't me. I used no such language," the vice president told newsmen later.

Bob Aiton, a petroleum products dealer here, and Patrick J. Hillings, Republican congressman of Arcadia, Calif., said they were certain Nixon made no such remark.

James E. Bassett, director of public relations for the Republican National Committee, said Aiton put the blame on a member of the TV technical crew.

"This fellow said: 'Who the hell did that?' when someone in the audience knocked over a monitor microphone," Bassett quoted Aiton.

But a KTTV spokesman denied this.

"This was an experienced crew," he said. "These fellows do 20 and 30 of these remote telecasts a week and they know their stuff. They were startled to hear the words 'who the hell' and immediately faded out the audio."

USAF Orders Jet Bomber

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Air Force has ordered "initial production" of its first faster-than-sound bomber—and possibly the world's first—the Convair B58.

Some experts say the B58, a medium-weight successor to the medium Boeing B47 and the heavy B52, may be the last of the piloted bombers before long-range strategic turns to the intercontinental guided missile.

The first B58 is still under construction behind a high wall in a closely guarded section of the mile-long Convair hangar at Fort Worth, Tex., where the giant B36 heavy bomber was produced. B36 production ended there last summer.

In disclosing its B58 order Wednesday, the Air Force also announced an initial production order for the Lockheed F104 lightweight fighter which also flies faster than sound.

The Pentagon announced last July that the initial experimental model, the XF104, had been flying successfully at Edwards Air Force Base, Calif. Lockheed said Wednesday an undisclosed number of the supersonic craft are already being assembled at its Burbank, Calif., plant.

Unofficial reports are that the thin, straight-wing aluminum fighter has flown faster than 1,000 miles an hour. It reportedly is only half as heavy as currently operational fighters, and twice as fast.

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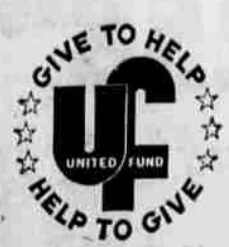
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