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Oilman offers alternatives to Carter plan

By STEVE BARNABY
Farmington editor

The American suburban life style could be drastically affected if President Jimmy Carter's plan to tax consumers for energy use is taken to an extreme.

That's the word from Robert Amori, president of the Michigan Petroleum Association and a Farmington Hills councilman, who says Carter should veer away from penalizing Americans for their energy use and rather encourage industry to come up with alternative methods of providing energy.

"If we conserve beyond what is actually being wasted, our productivity could be deterred which, in turn, would affect jobs, the cost of living and the balance of trade," said Amori, who is president of the Penquin Oil Co.

One of the far reaching consequences Amori sees if Carter's energy policy is carried too far is the devaluation of homes in the suburbs.

"VALUE OF PROPERTY is determined by buyers' willingness to pay. But if the energy taxes are too stringent, people won't be able to work in one community and live in another," says Amori.

Suburban areas slowly will vacate and property values could drop to the point where homeowners would be



ROBERT AMORI

selling their homes for less than they paid for them."

Because Carter will want to implement his programs rapidly, local residents must pay attention to the President's plan and let their Washington representatives know how they feel.

"It will be Congress's final decision on what happens, so residents must keep a watch on the situation in the next few weeks and contact people like U.S. Representative William Brodehead," he said, referring to the 17th District Democratic representative.

Taxing gasoline consumption is ineffective and addresses only the short term problem, says Amori, who cites European nations which have much higher prices for gasoline yet whose consumption has increased. Some Europeans pay as much as \$1.50 to \$2 for a gallon of gasoline, he says.

"IN THE LAST FEW years gas in this country has gone from 35 cents to 80 cents yet consumption has increased by 4.5 per cent. Taxing gasoline consumption is like using a band aid on a cut without healing it," he says of the Carter proposal.

As an alternative, Amori suggests controls be taken off the oil industry so that companies can use their profits for research in developing alternative methods for providing the country's energy needs.

"The real problem is energy and the lack of it. But private investment won't be used for research if profits are regulated," he says.

But, if the threat of price controls is lifted, the profits could be used for research, he says. The federal government could safeguard the public interest by taxing profits heavily if oil companies don't use the dollars for research.

At the same time, Americans could go about their normal business, consuming the usual amounts of energy by buying petroleum from other nations until alternate methods are

found, he says. For those who fear intimidation from foreign powers, Amori suggests we use our own resources as a barter.

"These other countries depend on us for foreign trade, particularly foodstuffs. By stimulating the economy we can learn how to direct the economy to produce goods needed by other countries to create a favorable balance of trade," he says.

Besides, limiting gasoline consumption is negative because the majority of petroleum used in this country

is out of necessity, rather than for pleasure, as those who favor taxing gasoline usage assume.

Coal as an alternative energy source could play a major role in saving gasoline until other alternatives are found, Amori says. Coal could be used to generate much of the industrial power of the country, saving gasoline for transportation use.

"Everything in this country is structured around the automobile. There are no really good bus systems and rural agricultural areas depend on pet-

roleum as does the trucking industry," he says.

Coal also could be used to create electricity to heat homes and office buildings, while the 55 mph speed limit could be enforced to save even more gasoline.

But, he warns, under any circumstances consumers should realize that energy prices will increase.

Other alternatives, Amori sees which should be developed in this country are nuclear, solar and geothermal power.



What's up, Doc?

Fine thing curiosity. To find out what these folks are gazing at, we suggest you look to the April 25 edition. One hint: obviously it's in the air but it's not Superman. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)

... as residents ponder pros and cons of saving

By LOUISE OKRUTSKY

Conscious of an energy crisis, Farmington residents and visitors are driving less often, turning down the air conditioning and using appliances sparingly.

A few persons who employ energy-saving methods insist the energy situation is exaggerated.

But most shoppers informally surveyed by the Observer & Eccentric recently, say they believe an energy shortage is creeping up on the country.

"I think it's going to be a terrible crisis," said Corinne Madden, of Farmington. "I think we should develop solar energy, as an alternative."

Although critics such as Ralph Nader have charged that nuclear energy is dangerous, Ms. Madden believes it is worth developing.

"People should conserve energy," she said. "We should have a national energy plan. We should stop making big cars."

At home, Ms. Madden uses her air conditioner judiciously and tries to keep the thermostat down in the winter.

Similarly, Roseann Morrison of Farmington Hills tries to economize on energy usage.

"I believe there is an energy crisis," said Mrs. Morrison. "I believe Carter's speech. We try to economize. We keep our thermostat lower and we use the air conditioner only when necessary."

SHE CONSERVES gasoline by belonging to a car pool which is operated by members of her bowling team. But she frowns on discontinuing the production of large cars.

"If they quit making large cars, they can shut down jobs. People should drive less and plan their trips



so they don't have to drive a great deal," she said.

A concern over the effect a popular move to small cars would have on the country's auto plants was voiced by Mrs. Chantelle Bateman, of South Lyon, who was shopping in Farmington.

"I would like to see a higher tariff on foreign-made small cars. My husband works for Chevrolet and he could lose his job if the imports came in," Mrs. Bateman said.

Although she advocates less frequent use of cars and believes that small cars are more fuel-efficient, she drives a medium-sized car.

"I have a little one and it's impossible to travel in a small car with a baby. You have to take along the high chair and stroller on long trips," she said.

She would like to do her shopping but she lives too far from the nearest store. "We live two miles outside of South Lyon," she explained.

HER HUSBAND DRIVES to work in Hamtramck, so a car is a necessity in their household. Occasionally, he will take his motorcycle to work when the car pool is unavailable.

"We need a large car for the car pool, too," Mrs. Bateman said. "You can't have five men in a small car. It's too crowded."

At home, she turns down her fur-

nance in the winter and uses her dishwasher once a week.

Although Mrs. Louise Adamson of Novi believes in energy conservation, she maintains that drivers should retain the right to own a large car.

"They shouldn't have to pay extra. They have a right to drive big cars. But there should be gas rationing. Everyone would get the same amount of gas. If a person had a big car, he would have to drive within the limits of his ration of gas."

Sam Mannino of West Bloomfield believes that energy consumers are ignoring the future. "People tend to take advantage of things. They don't think they'll have to worry about the future," he said.

Mannino is ready to back whatever energy-saving proposal the President advocates, including going back to old-fashioned methods.

"SOMETIMES THE OLD-fashioned methods prove to be better," he said. Mannino would like to work but he commutes to Farmington from West

(Continued on page 10A)

Board to seek tax increase in June

By LYNN ORR

Farmington School District voters will be asked with more than a simple yes-no decision for a school tax increase June 13.

School board members at Tuesday's meeting unanimously agreed to seek a 2.5 mill increase for five years, but voters will also be asked to support a 1.75 mill increase for two years on the same ballot.

If the first proposal is defeated, the board hopes, voters will approve the smaller increase for a shorter period of time.

Each mill is estimated to generate about \$335,000 to the district next year according to school officials' projections; and all funds generated by an approved tax increase would go for improvements.

"We don't want to scare the voters," said Supt. Lewis Schulman. "We can maintain a bare-bones program on existing millage, but we believe the community should have the opportunity to improve the educational system if they so desire."

Administration had originally requested a one year, one mill proposal, which many board members, as well as audience members, believed to be too little for too short a time. The board's final decision reflected Trustee Mervyn Ross' reasoning:

"We would be locking ourselves into coming back year after year for a one mill renewal." Ross contended, citing five reasons why he favored an option increase package.

Economic conditions, especially in the light of President Jimmy Carter's energy message; the spiraling cost of utilities; possible tax levies by the City of Farmington Hills; the cost of

unemployment compensation paid to pinkslipped teachers; and freedom from yearly renewal requests were cited by Ross in favor of the additional millage request.

Trustee Gary Lichtman strongly emphasized his belief that the community should have the final decision in supporting improvements in the educational program.

"We're not looking for pie in the sky or talking about three or four mill increases," he said. "If the people in this community are neither cheap nor stupid, and they know what they want, in our declining enrollment report, we heard from people who said that the reason people move into a community is the schools."

"We live pretty good in this community, and it should be able to spend for our kids."

IN SUPPORT OF THE INCREASE request, Richard Ringstrom, executive director of the Farmington Education Association, expressed similar sentiments.

"We don't want to eliminate the chance to vote for a full quality education program in this community," he said.

Farmington resident Bud Pickett

Pioneers have auction

Israel Chapter, Pioneer Women, will conduct its annual champagne dinner and mini-auction on April 23 at 7:30 p.m. at the Labor Zionist Building, 28355 Middle Belt, Farmington. Featured entertainment will be Uri Siegel.

also supported a longer term request than the original one-year proposal.

"I don't think this community is so naive that they don't know everyone's costs are going up. One mill looks like a stop-gap plug, and we know we're going to need 1.5 mills down the road," he said.

Farmington resident Sue Willis asked the board to consider the academically talented program (now a pilot program in a few schools) in the millage increase request.

Another member of the audience strongly admonished the board to allow the community to have the opportunity to support a millage increase.

"If you piddle this school district

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