

Ingenuity at the Gas Pump

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Gas prices hit another new high today at \$3.60 per gallon -- up 49 cents from the beginning of the year.

The reality of higher costs has driven some Americans to come up with their own solutions. When Brian Krohn started thinking outside the fuel crisis box, he discovered a new way to produce biodiesel.

"Our process can utilize any feedstock," said Krohn, an Ausburg College senior. "What this does is it makes biodiesel cheaper and you're not using a food source -- like corn or soybean source -- to make a fuel."

Krohn will present his findings to members of Congress Wednesday.

A new survey reported that Americans said paying for gas is their biggest economic concern and 44 percent call it a serious problem.

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Along with the price of gas rising, an interest in alternative vehicles is also

gaining speed. Some motorcycles can get up to 55 miles to the gallon.

"We are absolutely seeing an increase in sales," said George Dennis, vice president of Harley Davidson, New York. "I think it has a lot to do with the price of energy today."

Outside a Silicon Valley diner there were more examples of other alternative vehicles: a hybrid, a Ferrari and a \$150,000 prototype of the world's fastest electric car. It's an example of a society where dreams and technology are fueled by money.

Ian Wright is the entrepreneur whose dream it was to take electric car technology to the next level.

"Public perception, the investors' perception, is that electric cars are golf carts, that they're ugly little things that nobody really wants," said Wright.

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"We can build something that beats all of the Ferraris, all of the Porsches. And that gets people's attention."

Even though he's created an electric car that can bypass gas stations and do 170 mph, he knows the economics aren't there yet for mass production.

Wright says his \$150,000 electric car prototype technology won't be viable for passenger cars for 20 years.

But if drivers are not crafty with solutions or ready to give up their cars, experts say they should go back to the basics.

"Certainly vehicle maintenance is important," said Robert Sinclair of AAA. "Driving style is important, slowing down overall, being much more discreet in how we use our motor vehicles is going to have to be the trend."

Still others are holding out hope for government intervention.

On Monday, truckers circled Congress, blaring their horns in protest.

"The high price for oil is hurting our economy," organizer Mark Kirsch said to The Associated Press. "It's hurting middle class people."