



Highlights:

- High gas prices have given motorists a reason to abandon their vehicles to seek more affordable public transportation alternatives.
- Americans took 2.6 billion trips on public transportation during the first three months of this year—an increase of 85 million trips compared with the same period last year.
- According to June figures from the Department of Transportation, Americans drove 1.4 billion fewer highway miles from April 2007 through April 2008.

News:

Majic Consulting Group was recently selected to develop a Short Range Transit Plan for the Regional Transit Authority (RTA) in San Luis Obispo.

How to Turn High Fuel Costs into Lemonade

Nothing is better on a hot summer day than a tall, cold glass of lemonade. While this summer's high fuel prices are turning gas-guzzling SUVs into lemons, public transportation is turning the trend into lemonade.

Nationwide, the average cost of a gallon of gas has topped \$4.00 and is continuing to climb. Whether they choose van pools, light rail or local bus service, high gas prices have given motorists a reason to abandon their vehicles to seek more affordable public transportation alternatives.

Recent gas prices have had a considerable impact on commuters using public transportation.

Even regions that have traditionally resisted giving up cars or have limited access to public transportation are reporting a surge in public transportation use.



With high fuel prices turning SUVs into lemons, some transit agencies are making lemonade.

Americans used public transportation in record numbers during the first three months of this year, according to an American Public Transportation Association (APTA) survey.

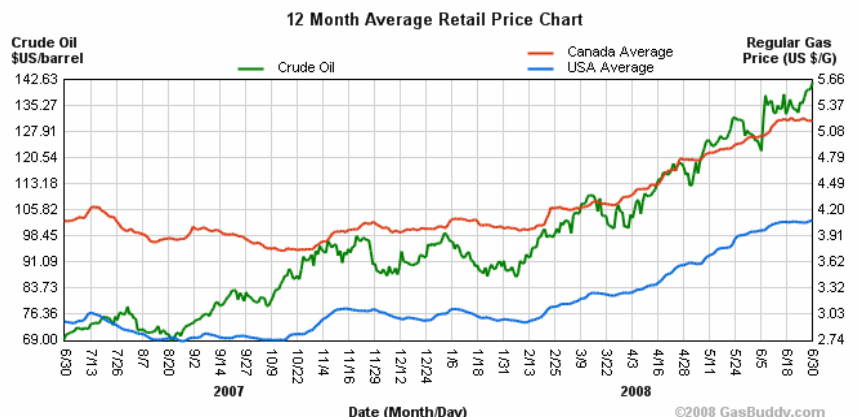
They took 2.6 billion trips on public transportation—an increase of 85 million trips compared with the same period last year.

Meanwhile, numbers behind the wheel fell. In the sixth consecutive monthly drop, Americans drove 1.4 billion fewer highway miles from April 2007 through April 2008, according to June figures from the Department of Transportation.

Though most agencies are underfunded and lack the budget to expand services to meet growing demand—particularly as their own fuel costs grow—now is the perfect

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Gas prices have climbed continuously during the last 12 months, as seen in the trendline. The average price of gas is \$4.06 per gallon nationwide.





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(turning high fuel costs into lemonade)

opportunity to encourage use and support of your transit services through education, awareness, and excellent customer service.

Here are five things you can do to turn the trial discretionary rider into a loyal customer and public transportation advocate:

1. Promote Guaranteed Ride Home service.

Alleviate the fear of being stranded by promoting this program in your area. Riders like to feel protected and have *control* of the situation.

2. Add a sense of community.

Long Beach Transit drivers wear Hawaiian shirts and

Bermuda shorts to convey *fun and friendly* attitudes to local riders.



California gas prices are among the highest in the nation.

3. Introduce a new Business Class pass.

Southwest Airlines recently introduced higher *Business Select* fares, which include priority boarding, extra frequent-flier miles, and a cocktail. A similar *commuter select pass* could provide reserved seats on crowded commuter

routes (and other perks) at a slightly higher cost.

4. Make sure website content is always current and accurate.

Also, include a gas mileage calculator on your site, so potential riders can compare *gas prices vs. taking the train or bus* for their trip.

5. Enhance sense of security among riders.

Well-lit bus stops, uniformed personnel at major urban stations, and on-board cameras will increase riders' perception of *safety*.

Opportunities abound for transit agencies to turn higher fuel costs and an influx of new riders into an advantage. Lemonade, anyone?