



Using Technology to Find Cheaper Gas

Getting the best deal on gasoline used to be a matter of comparing prices posted at stations on opposite street corners. But with fuel taking a bigger bite out of our budgets, drivers are looking for deals in a wider geographic area. Technology is helping drivers to find the cheapest gas prices.

Websites that compare gas prices at different stations have been available for years, but the offerings are becoming more sophisticated. In addition to gas prices delivered to cell phones, some Web sites now offer fuel consumption calculators, scout out sources of alternative fuels and even explore mass-transit options.

For some, technology helps us get more mileage out of our money. The Associated Press reports that a gallon of regular gasoline at the pumps in Houston is \$3.92 as of June 30, 2008. This is an increase of over 16% so far this year. Analysts are suggesting the price will hit \$4 before the summer driving season is over. Below are various sites to help you to find the cheapest gas in your area.

GasPriceWatch.com offers a mobile-phone application that can be downloaded onto your cell phone. You simply punched in the postal zip code and then you will receive prices at nearby gas stations. It even provides a map to make finding the station easier.

Widgets are another technology based application that has found to be useful for finding cheaper gas. A *widget* is a continually updated tool on a user's

computer that doesn't require future visit to a separate website. The best thing is that they are free. **Automotive.com** offers a widget that that monitors local gas prices.

Interdimensionmedia.com offers another free gas price, related widget, exclusively for Apple Inc. computers. The application allows users to plug in their car mileage, gas-tank size and current fuel level information. The widget then analyzes how much farther a driver can travel on the remaining fuel and how much it will cost to fill up. It also compares the price at a particular gas station with the average price in the area, to help drivers decide whether it's worth driving a few extra miles for the savings.

Fuel Tools

Some applications that help drivers find the best deals on gasoline.

■ On the Web:

www.gasbuddy.com
www.gaspricewatch.com
gasprices.mapquest.com

www.apple.com/downloads/dashboard/transportation/gas.html (Mac)

■ For cellphones:

www.getmobio.com/learn/cheapgas/

■ Fuel Economy:

www.fueleconomy.gov

■ Calculators:

gasprices.mapquest.com
fuelcostcalculator.com

■ Computer desktop application:

www.automotive.com/widgets/gas-prices/index.html

■ Alternative fuels and prices:

www.altfuelprices.com

www.interdimensionmedia.com/widgets/index.html (Mac)

■ Mass transit:

www.google.com/transit



On the Web, fuel calculators are available for both Mac and PC users—one of them through MapQuest's gas-price site at **GasPrices.mapquest.com**. According to MapQuest.com, the company is thinking of adding an online tool that will help travelers build a gasoline-station itinerary for their road trips based on price levels.

Other new online tools make it easier for consumers to evaluate whether to keep their gas guzzlers or not. For people who are in the market for a more fuel-efficient car, **Fueleconomy.gov**, a Web site run by the government, allows users to compare fuel efficiencies of different cars.

Gas price Web sites also are beginning to offer information for those looking for stations to fill up their car with alternative fuels, such as E85, a fuel that contains 85% ethanol, or compressed natural gas. **AltFuelPrices.com** identifies gas stations that offer alternative fuels, such as compressed natural gas. This site relies on volunteers to update the prices.

Another way to save is to get an additional discount on your loan rate at InvesTex Credit Union when you finance a new vehicle that has an EPA rating of 35 mpg or more as part of the Lone Star Rewards loan program. Receive up to ½% discount combining all Lone Star program discounts. Apply online at InvesTexCU.org, by phone at (866)449-0109, or in person at any one of our 6 locations.

Information obtained from The Wall Street Journal Online.