

Opinion

Editorial

Gas tax holiday a short sighted fix to big problem

Gov. Tony Evers has issued an executive order this week declaring that an abnormal economic disruption exists in Wisconsin due to a disruption of energy supplies, which then allows him to trigger a state ban on price gouging of gasoline and diesel.

In the order, Evers said the disruption in supply “poses a serious risk to the economic well-being of Wisconsin, both at the individual consumer level and to our essential tourism industry.”

By making that declaration, Evers could implement a ban on the sale of wholesale and retail diesel and gasoline “at unreasonably excessive prices.” The order will remain in effect until Dec. 1.

The price of gasoline and diesel was unreasonably and excessive in the state long before it began hovering around the \$5 per gallon mark. At this price, these fuels have been posing a serious risk to the economic well-being of Wisconsin for weeks.

Evers also renewed his call for the federal government to suspend the federal gas tax.

Parlor tricks won’t make much of a dent in the pain people are feeling at the pump with the biggest cars costing over \$100 for each fill-up.

The federal government taxes gasoline at 18.3 cents per gallon and diesel fuel 24.3 cents per gallon. A gas tax holiday would suspend those excise taxes for a certain, predetermined period of time. A number of states have adopted or proposed a moratorium on statewide gas taxes.

Wisconsin’s current state excise tax rate dedicated to transportation purposes is 30.9 cents per gallon. When the state’s petroleum cleanup program fee is added, total state taxes and fees collected at the pump is 32.9 cents per gallon – 11th highest in the nation

Combined, Wisconsin drivers pay over 50 cents per gallon in state and federal taxes and fees combined every time they fill their tank.

A federal gas tax holiday might save \$3-\$4 per tank.

A gas tax rate dedicated to transportation purposes is 30.9 cents per gallon might save \$6.

So the savings is maybe \$10 per tank when the price of just about everything else is skyrocketing.

Americans are grappling with a 41% spike in gas prices since Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in late February. Record-high gas prices have contributed to the worst inflation in 40 years, forcing the Federal Reserve to raise interest rates so aggressively that markets are in turmoil and recession risks are rising.

In 2008, former democratic President Barack Obama dismissed his rivals’ calls for national gas tax holiday as a political ploy that won’t help struggling consumers.

Obama then said, “We’re arguing over a gimmick that would save you half a tank of gas over the course of the entire summer so that everyone in Washington can pat themselves on the back and say they did something...Well, let me tell you, this isn’t an idea designed to get you through the summer, it’s designed to get them through an election.”

A gas tax holiday would do nothing to fix the supply shock driving up prices. It would also push demand in the wrong direction as drivers race to fill up more at the artificially lower prices.

These fuel taxes are vital for maintaining streets. You know the ones, the ones people are always complaining the state, county and municipality should fix. The federal gas tax hasn’t been increased since 1993, when gas was selling for just over \$1 a gallon. If anything the gas tax should be increased to better sustain deteriorating roadways.

It is also unclear how much savings could trickle back into drivers’ pockets with so many companies involved in the supply chain from well drillers to oil refiners to fuel truck transportation companies to store owners and so on.

Politicians will face a problem down the road when the tax holiday expires as it is going to be very unpopular when prices snap back up by 18 cents a gallon.

A gas tax holiday is a bad idea.

Ladysmith News editorials are written by news staff.

Letters

Says newspaper has begun journalistic precedent publishing B&B sale numbers

Marty and I found it interesting that the Ladysmith paper has begun a journalistic precedent of “BREAKING NEWS” about homes that have sold in the area, and the conditions of the sale; including the down payment and monthly payments due.

As the editor responded when I asked, “The public has the right to know”. So, in the interest of public “knowing”, here are a few omissions.

A detail left out was that the balance of the B&B mortgage was almost \$200,000 (remember the tornado), so if the public has the right to know, that’s something they might need to know. The original mortgage payment and insurance, added almost \$2000 a month to the cost of keeping the library out of the demo dump.

Another important aspect of the original sale was that we “bought it for a dollar”. Of course, we then invested over a half million in restoration and furnishings. Over a number of years, while we owned the Bed and Breakfast, we paid over \$8,000 a year in property taxes. We didn’t get it tax free and those taxes were paid on time every year.

Carnegie Hall was our primary residence before, during, and after it became a Bed and Breakfast.

Wisconsin law states that a B&B is a primary residence and that means it was our home. Our PRIVATE residence, first and foremost; but a B&B was the only way we could see to save the old library from being tore down and the property turned into a parking lot or a green space. We sold off every thing we owned and mortgaged the rest.

When Marty was asked if he wanted to comment on the sale of the B&B, he assumed it would be about finances, and declined. The question could have been about our personal experiences with guests over the years; or the feeling of loss that we have after 20 years of sharing our home with so many; or the value that so many guests and community members felt the B&B added to our town.

While we lived at Carnegie Hall, we met some amazing people and have some wonderful memories about our experiences. Whether it was the Nobel Prize recipient from Sweden, or a German-only speaking family from Austria, or the motorcycle couple who shared their stay at the B&B with a Minneapolis radio talk show, or the bicyclists traveling across the United States keeping a blog for their followers; to me these are more newsworthy

than numbers. The numbers in the “NEWS” article reflect none of this.

While those numbers may be a part of the public right to know, I would caution anyone interested in selling their home, especially if their residence houses a business, that this may be the shape of things to come. While it may fall under the category of public awareness, I think publishing the numbers stretches the term “ethical” to the limits.

An aside to the editor: You’ve unveiled another coat of paint on an urban legend; “If you have a business, you must be rich”, with your implication that, “If you sell your home or business, you’re now rich and have money to burn”. There isn’t one property/business owner who doesn’t worry from month to month about payrolls, taxes, requirements and responsibilities of ownership, liability insurance, and countless other expenses that come with owning a business. As any business owner will tell you, owning a business isn’t all about sitting by the cash register and raking in the dough.

Pat Reynolds
Ladysmith

Open letter to Trump supporters asking how many times do you have to be duped

An open letter to Trump supporters:

How many times do you have to be duped before you finally get it? While you cling to the fantastical tales of D’Souza’s hilarious movie, even Trump’s former attorney general, William Barr, who was a loyalist until the end, laughed aloud during his testimony at the ridiculousness of the mockumentary, “2000 Mules.” You claim this movie, full of faulty assumptions, to be the truth – but have any of you been listening to the bi-partisan January 6th hearings where the TRUTH is coming out. The only persons giving testimony in these hearings are Trump staff members, and even his lawyers who all claim he is at fault for the insurrection, his attempt to have his Vice President assassinated, and agreement to the fact the Trump is guilty of seditious conspiracy. Trump’s own daughter, Ivanka – did not buy into

the conspiracy about a fraudulent election. She negated claims of voter fraud.

How many of you were duped into contributing to Trump’s \$250 million so-called “Official Election Defense Fraud” fund? Trump’s own campaign digital director Gary Coby told the January 6th committee that the fund was merely a “marketing tactic” and the money was not used as Trump falsely claimed. You were swindled into donating in good faith to help Trump’s false claims. Most of your hard-earned money went into the pocket of Trump’s family and friends. The “Grifter in Chief” duped you again? And this is another crime he committed – money laundering.

It is easy to understand how so many of you believe in all these falsehoods when a former history teacher in this county, himself, does not

know the difference between fiction and reality. As a former university professor, I believed the most important thing I could instill in my graduate level students, who were mostly teachers, was to think critically. That evidently was not the case of this individual who fell for the fiction masquerading as truth in the D’Souza movie. I feel sorry for his former students who today may not be able to engage in reflective judgement due to the shortcomings of their teacher who obviously does not know the difference between fiction and truth. Again, how many times are you going to continue to be duped into believing and continuing to support an abhorrent man who did everything he could to destroy democracy, this country, and the constitution on which it stands?

Nancy Pynnonen Kraft
Sheldon

Says there is overwhelming proof, evidence there was massive voter fraud in election

“2000 Mules” is a documentary based on the investigation by True the Vote (TTV) which sheds light on the election fraud of the 2020 election. A mule is defined as a person that visited 10 or more drop boxes and 5 non governmental organizations (NGOs). NGOs process the ballots and that is where the Mules pick them up. So, if a family member was delivering another family members ballots they would have no reason to stop at an NGO and they would not be included or counted as a mule. The TTV investigation found that mules were paid through the NGOs from Zuckerberg funds. In Atlanta TTV identified 242 mules, Arizona 202 mules, Wisconsin 138 mules, Michigan 500 mules & Pennsylvania 1100 mules. They all met or exceeded 10 ballot drops & 5 NGO stops.

Mark Zuckerberg spent \$419 Million dollars primarily in the six key states .. Election laws prevent individuals from contributing more than \$5,000 per year and Zuckerberg should be criminally prosecuted for this action. As referenced

in Chief Justice Gablemans report in Wisconsin the 5 cities that received “Zuck Bucks” include Milwaukee, Madison, Green Bay, Racine, and Kenosha. These cities were paid \$8.8 Million dollars and to date refuse to account for where the money was spent.

It is illegal for caregivers in nursing homes to complete, sign, deliver or assist with ballots. In many instances in nursing homes residents that were determined incapacitated, others were completing ballots for them when they had no mental ability to understand what was being completed. In Milwaukee, Madison and Racine 100% of all nursing home residence cast a ballot. Anyway you look at it, that is voter fraud and illegal.

Chief Justice Gableman Report states “The Wisconsin Election Commission (WEC) unlawful activity facilitated and encouraged widespread criminality and election fraud. Aside from the fact that they were legally and morally wrong these acts lead to 100% voting rates in nursing homes

throughout the state and incapacitated people voted state wide. The fact that there are 92,000 nursing home residents governed by Wisconsin statutes and tens of thousands illegal ballots from these facilities were counted as cast ballots from these facilities put doubt in the 2020 presidential election results”

Counts, recounts, and re-counts are quite frankly a joke considering you are recounting the ballots including illegal ballots that have been received illegally!!! It’s like taking a bushel of apples and thinking if you keep recounting them you will have a different outcome.

There is overwhelming proof and evidence that there was massive voter fraud in the 2020 election. All American citizens in this country need to be aware that we are no longer a democracy and the lifestyle we have enjoyed our children will not!!!

Bill Rands
Ladysmith

The Capitol Report

Wisconsin business startups jump 42 percent during pandemic

By WisPolitics.com

The head of Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) says the state’s “entrepreneurial spirit” is reflected in the 42 percent boost in new businesses formed during the pandemic.

“It’s actually really exciting, because you could imagine that in the face of a pandemic, folks would retract, right?” WEDC Secretary and CEO Missy Hughes said in a recent interview. “They would say, ‘I’m not going to do anything new, I’m going to stay safe in my job, I’m going to stay safe where I am.’ But instead, what we’re seeing is a real entrepreneurial spirit.”

The number of new business formations in Wisconsin leaped 42 percent between 2019 and 2021, from 50,277 to 71,151, according to figures provided by the Department of Financial Institutions.

Within that two-year timeframe, the larger jump was seen between 2020 and 2021, with an increase of 24.3 percent. Between 2019 and 2020, the increase was 13.8 percent.

By comparison, the year-over-year increases going back to 2011-2012 ranged from 3.2 percent to 8.4 percent, the DFI figures show.

Federal figures provided by the National Federation of Independent Business show both employer establishment “births” and “deaths” in the state have largely been increasing over the same period. While the number of new employers rose over the first three quarters of 2021, the number of those shutting down saw an increase in mid-2020 – briefly exceeding the number of new companies – before falling below 2019 levels later in

the year.

Meanwhile, DFI figures show the total number of registered business establishments – or “active entities” – in the state has risen from just over 365,000 in 2012 to over 530,000 in 2021. Between 2019 and 2021, when the spike in new business formations occurred, that number increased from about 471,000 to about 530,000.

Wisconsin Technology Council President Tom Still says the increase in business activity is “consistent with some other trends” the group had been tracking during the pandemic.

“As people lost or left previous jobs because of COVID’s effect on the economy or their families, they often looked to other means of paying the bills,” Still said in a statement. “For many, that meant starting their own business, using skills and talents they already had but had not previously put to work for themselves.”

Matt Cordio, the co-founder of the Wisconsin Startup Coalition, notes the state has “long struggled” with forming new businesses. But he says the economic uncertainty created by the COVID-19 pandemic “in addition to record levels of available venture capital and private equity” helped drive this sharp increase.

“This is exciting news for Wisconsin as startup companies create net new jobs in the economy,” he said in a statement. “Policymakers should work to foster a supportive environment for these new companies by investing in talent attraction, workforce development, and creating a more attractive tax and regulatory climate in the State.”

Hughes agreed greater availability of venture

capital in Wisconsin is playing a role, as well as the pressures of the pandemic putting more people into “problem-solving mode.”

“This is what we want to see, right? We want to see this trend upwards of businesses being created, because it shows activity in the economy and shows folks taking the initiative to start something new and to see if it works out,” she said.

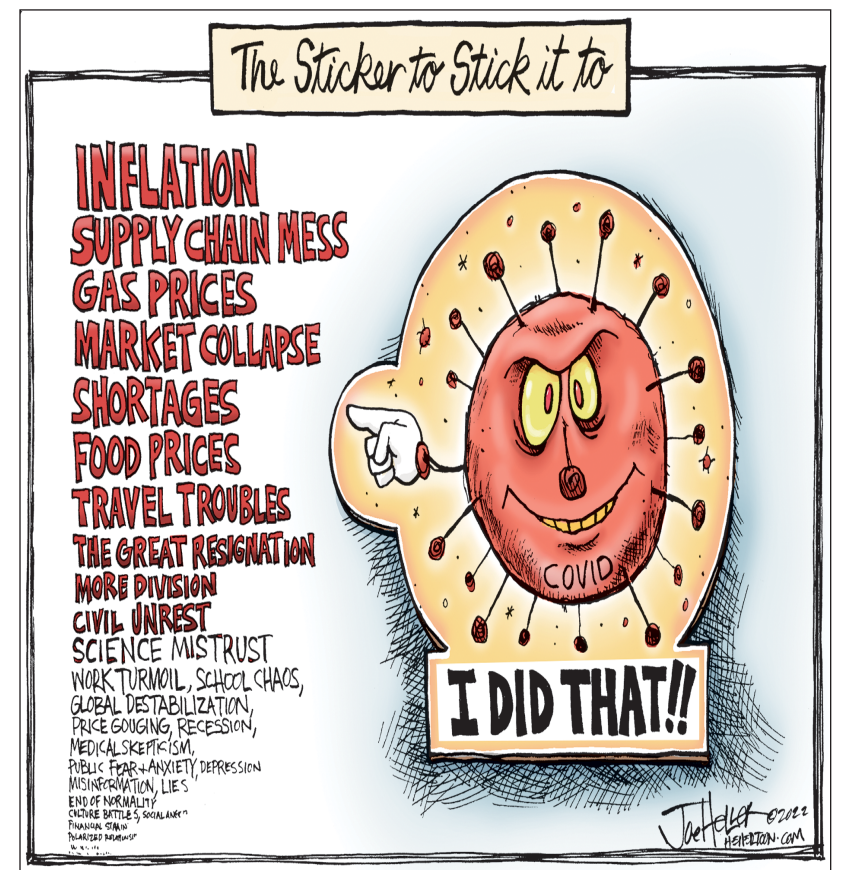
Still also pointed to “rising investor interest” around startups in Wisconsin. He noted angel and venture capital deals totaling over \$852 million in 2021, eclipsing the \$483 million total seen in 2020.

A Wisconsin Economic Development Corp. spokesman said the DFI numbers also show the state “generally has done a better job” of investing pandemic stimulus money into small businesses. He pointed to a report from the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities that ranked Wisconsin first among U.S. states for investing pandemic funds as a share of total funds into the business, and second for investing in academic development.

“We’ve put close to probably about \$600 million into assisting small businesses here in Wisconsin, and I think that’s one of the things that we’re starting to see it bearing fruit,” he said.

For more, go to www.wispolitics.com

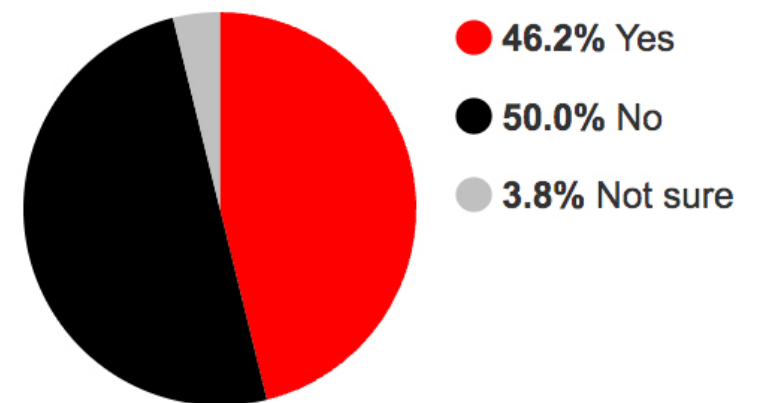
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On-line poll

(Last week’s question and result)

Will you do anything special for Dad on Father’s Day?



To vote on this week’s new poll question:

Do you go to a professional fireworks show?

go to www.ladysmithnews.com