





# Skyrocketing fuel prices spur call for investigation

By John Diamond  
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Angry homeowners, besieged oil delivery companies and now governors across the Northeast are calling on federal officials to find out why home heating oil prices have skyrocketed this month to their highest levels ever.

U.S. Rep. Richard Neal's office received some 50 phone calls in two days from angry homeowners. Oil delivery companies in Maine are calling for an investigation. In Washington, word is that the situation "is being closely monitored."

The jump from about 85 cents per gallon two weeks ago to as high as \$1.62 per gallon today has led officials from Gov. Mario Cuomo of New York to Gov. Judd Gregg of New Hampshire to call for federal investigations of possible gouging and price fixing.

Rhode Island Gov. Edward D.

DiPrete sent a telegram Wednesday to the head of the Federal Trade Commission requesting an investigation into the price hike.

Whether oil companies are in collusion or not, public officials and industry experts agree that an unusual confluence of events has led to the highest prices ever for home heating oil.

Events ranging from low water levels on the Rhine River to a refinery explosion in Louisiana have contributed to the upsurge. Above all, of course, is the record cold spell that has gripped much of the nation this month. For the Northeast, forecasters are calling for more chilly temperatures this weekend after a brief respite.

"It's pretty grim," said Sam Livieri Jr., vice president of Apple Oil Co. in Branford, Conn. "No, it's very grim. We're telling people \$1.29 a gallon and they can't afford it. I don't blame them for being upset."

The constant barrage of record-breaking low temperatures has contributed to increases of as much as 12 cents a gallon since Tuesday.

Some dealers in north-central Connecticut are quoting delivery prices of more than \$1.40 a gallon, and state and local officials who help keep the poor warm say the soaring fuel prices are straining their resources. J. Wallace Malley, chief of the public protection division of Vermont's attorney general's office, said, "It's what some people might call a gouge." But he added that as yet there is no evidence of unlawful price fixing.

Sam Livieri Jr.  
Apple Oil Co., Branford

Cuomo on Wednesday called on the Justice Department to conduct a probe of the heating oil price increases. "Home heating oil is a necessity, not a luxury," Cuomo said. Massachusetts Gov. Michael S. Dukakis was the first to call for a probe, writing to the Department of Energy last week along with Congressman Neal, the Massachusetts Democrat whose office has been deluged with calls.

In New Hampshire, Gov. Judd Gregg ordered his energy chief to call federal energy officials Wednesday.

"I'm outraged by what's happened here and it's not a factor and force of the market place," said Neal, D-Mass. "Supplies could well have been kept low in anticipation of a cold winter in an effort to jack the prices."

Home heating oil, unlike electricity and natural gas, is unregulated and therefore subject to market fluctuations.

Rachel Shimsak of the Massachusetts Energy Office said a severe cold snap in Europe and in southern regions of the United States has strained home heating oil supplies. In addition, reserves of home heating oil were low at the start of the winter, she said.

Energy Department spokeswoman Mary Kaye Heinze said the department was aware of the concern in the Northeast and was collecting information to "assess the situation," but had reached no conclusions.

Fuel industry representative Bernard Smith of the New England Fuel

Institute, which represents 1,300 member companies, rejected the charge of price manipulation.

"If you take one word it's 'demand' and the second word is 'weather,'" said Smith. The low water level of the Rhine River in Germany is slowing deliveries to Europe and thus tying up supplies, in addition, cold weather in southern states has caused about a half dozen refineries to shut down or limit production because the temperatures hamper the refining process.

An explosion over the weekend at an Exxon refinery in Baton Rouge, La., caused the heating oil futures market to soar.

Prices this week topped the previous peak of \$1.55 per gallon in 1981 at the tail end of the Arab oil embargo, according to Smith. At their lowest level in the past decade, prices for home heating oil were at about 55 cents per gallon during the summer of 1986, according to Smith.

# Commuter rail line set to go

By Larry Rosenthal  
The Associated Press

NEW HAVEN — A new commuter rail service heavily subsidized by the state will begin operating this spring between Old Saybrook and New Haven, with the goal of easing congestion on Interstate 95 and the Quinnipiac River Bridge.

Amtrak will operate the rail service for the state at an initial cost of \$1.95 million a year, state transportation officials said Wednesday.

The Department of Transportation has purchased two locomotives, three 66-passenger cab cars and seven 102-passenger coaches from the Port Authority of Allegheny County, Pa., for \$17.7 million.

Transportation officials said the equipment was last used in April and is in excellent condition. But they said modifications will have to be made to meet federal regulations governing Northeast Corridor rail operations.

Shore Line East, as the new service will be called, had originally been scheduled to begin operating this year. But it was delayed by a number of technical and legal problems, including Amtrak's insistence that all liability rest with the state, officials said.

The state's initial investment in the service is more than \$4 million. Transportation officials are projecting that fares will bring in about \$300,000 the first year, covering only about 15 percent of the operating costs.

The state transportation commissioner, J. William Burns, said Wednesday "there are very demonstrative reasons for doing it, as expensive as it is."

Burns said the service, over about 30 miles of Amtrak track, is intended largely to ease rush-hour congestion on Interstate 95 and the Quinnipiac River Bridge, the interstate span over New Haven Harbor.

More than 120,000 vehicles pass over the bridge daily. The state is studying where to put a second harbor crossing to relieve the bottleneck but the project is still many years away.

Commuters arriving at Union Station in New Haven will be able to take Amtrak or Metro-North trains to Fairfield County or New York City, or hop on a free shuttle bus that will make a loop around the city's business district, with stops at such places as Southern New England Telephone and Yale-New Haven Hospital.

The trip between Old Saybrook and New Haven will take about 50 minutes.

"Railroads, we think, are going to make New Haven the strong hub of this region," said Matthew Nemerson, president of the Greater New Haven Chamber of Commerce, which planned the shuttle bus service.

Fares have not yet been set, but transportation officials said one-way tickets would cost up to \$4. Discounts will be provided for monthly ticket purchases.

Four Shore Line East trains will run westbound in the morning from Old Saybrook to New Haven,



Patrick Flynn/Manchester Herald

HOLIDAY PREPARATION — Kathy Cumberbatch, a member of the Student Council at Manchester High School, hangs decorations last week in preparation for a holiday social. The social was the last party and dance for students before the Christmas holidays.

# Prescription drug scam puts man under arrest

NEW HAVEN (AP) — A man accused of posing as both doctor and patient to get drugs from the Yale-New Haven Hospital emergency room wound up instead under the care of police.

Barry Jacobs, 27, whose address is unknown, was charged Tuesday with criminal impersonation and criminal intent to possess narcotics.

Emergency room workers uncovered the scheme when they allegedly overheard Jacobs making a telephone call from the emergency room. Jacobs allegedly pretended to be the doctor and tried to hurry the prescription process.

Police said Wednesday that a man using a real doctor's name called the hospital at 7 p.m. and asked physicians to prepare a bottle of narcotic pills for a "patient" with back problems.

The caller, who identified himself as Dr. Alan Goodman, didn't sound like the real orthopedist Dr. Goodman, hospital officials said.

The fake Goodman asked emergency room doctors to give Percocet pills, a painkiller, to a patient who had been in a collision with a Derby municipal truck and was suffering back pain, hospital officials said.

Half an hour later, a man who identified himself as Andrew DeFelle showed up asking for the prescription for Percocet.

Keggi later called the real Dr. Goodman at home, who said he had never called the emergency room. Goodman said he had given non-narcotic painkillers Tuesday to a man with a different name but the same story. Goodman had refused a request for narcotics.

Instead of limping out with 40 Percocet pills, Jacobs was invited into an emergency examination room, where doctors and hospital police confronted him.

Jacobs was turned over to New Haven police at 9:30 p.m. Tuesday and was to be arraigned today on the two felonies.

# Old Saybrook settles lawsuit over attempt to evict homeless

By Larry Rosenthal  
The Associated Press

NEW HAVEN — The town of Old Saybrook has settled a lawsuit alleging it discriminated against homeless families, agreeing to make \$10,000 available to about 12 families over the next three years for emergency rent payments and security deposits.

While agreeing to the settlement, which was approved Dec. 20 by U.S. District Judge Jose Cabranes, the town denied the allegations of discrimination.

The lawsuit stemmed from the town's efforts in March to stop the state from placing homeless families in Old Saybrook motels for up to 100-day periods. The placements are made under Connecticut's emergency-shelter program.

The families eligible to draw from the \$10,000 fund were all living in Old Saybrook motels when the suit

# Frigid weather gets blamed for closure of bridge on I-95

BRIDGEPORT (AP) — The northbound and southbound slow lanes of a bridge on Interstate 95 were closed because a steel girder apparently contracted in frigid temperatures, pushing metal bearings into a position where they were designed to expand and contract in varying weather conditions. This time the girders apparently contracted to such an extent that they called rocker bearings, were pushed into an extreme position, he said.

Crews were called to the scene Wednesday afternoon to install steel supports to secure the bridge, he said. When the supports are in place,

extra cold weather we've had for such a long period of time," Coffey said.

"Cold weather's very hard on metal... It causes things to literally freeze and also causes them to contract beyond normal limits. We design for something this severe but it doesn't always happen."

In 1983, a 100-foot section of the Mianus River Bridge on Interstate 95 in Greenwich collapsed, killing three motorists and injuring three others. The collapse, blamed on poor maintenance of the bridge, prompted a multi-billion dollar road and bridge improvement program in Connecticut.

Coffey said "there is no danger" in the case of the Bridgeport bridge, but he continued, "we're taking all precautionary actions. That's why we're in there shoring it up."

# No hike due in state train fares

HARTFORD (AP) — Connecticut's transportation commissioner has approved fare increases for Metro-North trains traveling within New York state, but held firm to an earlier pledge to reject increases for trains originating in Connecticut.

Under the agreement between New York and Connecticut for Metro-North train service, both states are required to approve any fare changes.

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority, the parent company of Metro-North, had sought fare increases averaging 15 percent.

On Dec. 12, Gov. William A. O'Neill vetoed any increase in fares for riders boarding trains in Connecticut, a move that stunned MTA Chairman Robert R. Kiley, who said the refusal would likely mean a cut-back in Connecticut service.

Connecticut Transportation Commissioner J. William Burns said Connecticut would go to court to block any effort to reduce Metro-North service in Connecticut.

In a letter to Kiley released Wednesday, Burns requested a meeting between officials from the two states to resolve their differences over a 1990 budget for Metro-North.

"We desire to find a solution that is satisfactory to all concerned without threats," Burns said in his letter to Kiley, "but we are prepared to use every means available to protect the rights of the citizens of the state of Connecticut."

"We trust you will immediately withdraw your caulkback threat, which places us on an inevitable collision course, and then meet with us to work out a budget for 1990," Burns said.

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**Manchester Herald**

Saturday, Dec. 30, 1989 Manchester, Conn. — A City of Village Charm Newsstand Price: 35 Cents

**Trident reductions attacked**

*Legislators vow to fight plan to cut production ... page 3*

**MACC takes aim at U.S. arms aid To El Salvador**

*Church group's directors react to murder of priests ... page 9*



**IT'S TIME TO STOP AND PUSH** — Chip Jordan, front, 16, of Waddell Road, and Joe Pastula, 15, of 20 Hyde St., struggle against Friday night's snowstorm to gather shopping carts outside Stop & Shop on Broad Street, where they work. The National Weather Service predicted the storm would dump up to 2 inches of snow on the area. Story on page 6.

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