

and purchase more goods online (especially from sites where the shipping is free). For my husband, he will begin commuting to work by bike two days/week. The concept of drilling for more domestic oil is a Band-aid approach to our need for more oil. We would not see the results for years and they would only be short-lived. Instead, states should be focused on building city infrastructure and public transportation systems to accommodate the new reality of high fuel prices. As a nation, we should provide incentives for alternative energy research. As a resident of Boise, I am more than willing to utilize the bus system. However, Valley Ride severely lacks what the Treasure Valley would need to make it an appealing option. I came from a city where I utilized two forms of public transportation a day (bus and light rail). It was an inconvenient in some ways but mostly wonderful considering I saved on gas money, read my book and felt great about doing 'my part' to help the environment. Besides helping residents, a new and innovative public transportation system appeals to those visiting our beautiful valley as well. Our infrastructure and public transportation system in the Treasure Valley lacks the innovation, efficiency and foresight to become a real option for those feeling the crunch of high gas prices. It is too bad that as a nation, state, and county we are so reactive to issues like this rather than leaders! Why not address the local changes that we can make right here and now that will only continue to benefit and serve us going forward?

ALLISON, Boise.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to tell how the rising cost of gasoline is affecting my family. Just yesterday, I had to cancel reservations I had made back in March for a family vacation to the Oregon Coast in September. This "yurt" vacation was going to be the highlight of our year. In fact, we had been planning it since early in March. Already living on a tight budget, this simple vacation would have been an extravagance for us. But I was only able to budget up to \$4 a gallon for gas. Now that the price of gas has reached the \$4 mark and is expected to be much higher by September, we had no choice but to cancel. We will be taking a "staycation" instead.

My husband and I share one automobile and are already conservative with our driving. Most days, he drives from our house to the nearest bus stop (about 3 miles) to take a crowded bus to work in downtown Boise. On the one to two days a week that I need the car to drive to work, I have to get him to and from the bus. We have been doing this for over a year now. Our budget already required this of us when gas prices were under \$3 a gallon. We seem to have no other way to cut back. My husband has been trying to get a job near where we live which would enable him to ride his bicycle to work but, so far, he hasn't been able to. For us, driving less to save dollars at the pump means giving up some time we would usually spend visiting with family and friends, most of whom live 30 miles from us.

Perhaps the biggest way this has affected my family is that we have continued to be unable to afford health insurance. Though my husband has had a couple of good raises over the past year and a half (and is insured through his employer), those raises were eaten up in rising fuel and grocery prices. So, I have been unable to budget in the nearly \$400 month it would cost to put myself and our two boys on health insurance.

Again, thank you for this opportunity!

SUSAN, Meridian.

I do not know if this will really help you, but anything is worth a try, especially for the whole of the United States.

My story begins about a year ago, when I discovered I was pregnant. My husband is blind! He receives SSI. Because of this, if I work fulltime and gross \$1,400 in a month, the United States government takes away his SSI. OK, no problem. If I claim our daughter and my husband, then not enough taxes will be taken out, and I will owe at the end of the year and struggle to pay what I will owe. If I do not claim our daughter and my husband, then to survive every month will be a challenge because my net income (take home) will be roughly half and then that leaves little to pay the bills (as if we have enough now). So I work parttime, and we still cannot pay all our bills.

Our electricity bill was over \$200 in one month, during this last winter. With our daughter being a newborn, we just did not want to risk the temperature lower than 65 degrees, which is where we kept our thermostat, just to try to keep the electric bill down. We did receive energy assistance; that helped. However we are still behind in our electric bill, and, to be perfectly honest with you, if I was to work fulltime, I could not afford the fuel in the car. My car is a 1989 GEO Tracker which gets up to 25-28 miles per gallon. So where does that leave my husband, our daughter and me? Broke and completely reliant on the government to survive, especially with the cost of food going up. Our \$900 stimulus check is not going to the economy; it is going to pay credit card debt, just as my income tax return did.

Well, hopefully this will help you in your fight on Capitol Hill.

CHRISSEY, Sagle.

#### ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

##### RECOGNIZING DUKE EYE CENTER

• Mr. BURR. Mr. President, today I recognize the Duke Eye Center in North Carolina for its determined efforts to promote awareness, treatment, and prevention of glaucoma. Glaucoma, an optic nerve disease, is the leading cause of incurable blindness in the United States. Worldwide, 70 million people suffer from the disease, 2.2 million of those in the United States. Because the disease does not usually show signs until the point that irreversible vision loss occurs, the development of early detection and prevention strategies is imperative.

We recently observed World Glaucoma Day, on March 12, 2009. In light of this important observance, I express my thanks for the researchers and staff at the Duke Eye Center, who are devoted to the task of uncovering the cause of glaucoma. Historically, most research and treatment has focused on reducing elevated pressure within the eye. However, not everyone with glaucoma has elevated pressure, and not everyone with elevated pressure develops glaucoma. Researchers at the Duke Eye Center are working diligently to uncover other possible causes of the disease. Researchers and clinicians have excellent working relationships, collaborating on genomics, oxidative stress, and even links to Alzheimer's disease. They are performing cutting edge research, while at the same time delivering cutting edge patient care.

In 2008, Ophthalmology Times ranked the Duke Eye Center fourth best

among U.S. ophthalmology programs. I applaud their hard work and achievements in the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of glaucoma.●

##### HONORING BANCROFT CONTRACTING CORPORATION

• Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize a Maine small enterprise that epitomizes the values and commitment necessary to excel not only as a business, but also as a leader in the community. Bancroft Contracting Corporation, located in the western Maine town of South Paris, is one of the leading general contractors in Maine, and does superb work in industrial and commercial markets throughout New England. I am extremely proud to report that the Small Business Administration has named Bancroft's president, Mark A. Bancroft, the 2009 Maine Small Business Person of the Year.

Bancroft Contracting is a second-generation, family-owned company that provides a wide range of construction and industrial maintenance services to an array of diverse markets. Founded in 1977 by Al Bancroft, the firm's customers include pulp and paper manufacturers, power-generating companies, State transportation departments, and cement and plastics manufacturers. Additionally, Bancroft Contracting supplies thousands of cubic yards of reinforced concrete every season for a variety of projects that include dams, bridges, and large commercial foundations. The company employs more than 130 construction professionals in the winter months and upwards of 200 in the summer. Bancroft's employees represent a wide spectrum of construction professions, from structural welders and pipe fitters, to riggers and ironworkers, and they all possess an extraordinary level of expertise in their specialized areas.

Bancroft Contracting prides itself on relationship-based customer service, and the company responds diligently to all customer requests in a prompt and efficient manner. In a similar vein, Bancroft takes care to contribute significantly to the well-being of the western Maine community. Organizations and institutions that have benefited from Bancroft's generous contributions and services over the years include the University of Maine, the area school department, the Boy Scouts, various local sports teams, Kiwanis, and the Rotary Club.

As Bancroft's president for the past 7 years, Mark Bancroft has had a significant impact on the company's direction. He is a graduate of the construction management technology program in the School of Engineering Technology at the University of Maine. Notable, he started his tenure at Bancroft Contracting at the age of 14 and continued working for the company throughout high school and college. Mr. Bancroft learned the business at an early age and received critical training