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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Driving Safe, Saving Gas

It is easy to see that safe driving can prevent accidents and help avoid speeding tickets. Both of these can increase your car insurance rates. What isn't quite as easy to see are other ways that unsafe driving can eat into your pocket book. In the age of \$3.00 for a gallon of gasoline, the Barren River District Health Department thinks it is a good idea to look at our driving habits. There are a few some simple steps we can take to ease some of the pain at the pump.

One of the most effective ways to reduce the amount of gas used is to avoid aggressive driving. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) defines aggressive driving as, "when individuals commit a combination of moving traffic offenses so as to endanger other persons or property." Aggressive driving includes speeding, following too closely, zipping from lane to lane, not signaling lane changes correctly, flashing headlights in frustration, not obeying stop signs, yield signs, traffic lights and railroad crossing signals. Running red lights is one of the most dangerous forms of aggressive driving, but even aggressive drivers who aren't involved in an accident or stopped by police are paying a price. Aggressive driving can increase gas use by 33%. In other words, aggressive drivers are paying an extra \$1.00 per gallon for gasoline.

Another way to ease the gas burden is to keep your speed within the speed limit. When driving on the highway, most cars get their best gas mileage between 40 and 60 mph. For each additional 5 mph over 60, your gas bill increases by a little over 6.5% or about \$0.20 per gallon. Of course these numbers are averages; larger cars will use more gas at higher speeds than smaller cars.

Also, remember that keeping a car well maintained can improve its performance and gas mileage by 4% or approximately \$0.12 per gallon. A car's tires are designed to hold a certain amount of air. When properly inflated, the tires not only last longer but they also hold the road with better traction giving the vehicle better handling and better overall gas mileage. Properly inflated tires can save 3% on your gas bill. That works out to about \$0.09 per gallon.

Many people say that they will change their driving habits when gas reaches \$5.00 per gallon. For some of us, we are even closer than we thought. An aggressive driver, who likes to drive 75

mph or more, and doesn't take care of their car, can easily spend over \$1.81 more per gallon of gas. Remember, aggressive driving is neither good for the driver or the pocket book.

The US Government web site www.fueleconomy.gov has a wealth of information about how to get the best mileage out of your vehicle. You can also visit www.BarrenRiverHealth.org for local statistics and tips about safe driving.

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