



History of US gas stations



The first modern gas station, with pumps installed outside a business that sold gas and other items, opened in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in 1913. The idea quickly took hold and more than 121,000 gas stations opened by 1929. Prior to that, people had purchased cans of gasoline from pharmacies and other stores.

President Biden addresses high gas prices

President Joe Biden has ordered that one million barrels of oil be released every day for six months from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, a US government complex that stores oil at different sites to be used in emergencies. It is the largest release ever from the country's stockpile, and the intention is to lower gas prices.

What is happening?

The cost of a gallon of gasoline in the US has soared in 2022. In March, the average cost hit a record high of \$4.33. In California, the state with the highest gas prices, fuel reached an average price of \$5.91 per gallon. The price was as high as \$7 a gallon in Los Angeles. In Alabama, gas prices have jumped by \$1.40 since last year. Nationwide, families could

spend an extra \$2,000 this year to pay for the fuel they need. The Strategic Petroleum Reserve was created in 1975, partly to provide protection against this type of price increase. In the early 1970s, countries in the Middle East reduced their oil sales to the US, which triggered a shortage and caused prices to spike. Fuel was rationed in the US, and people waited in line for hours at gas stations.

What is the goal of the announcement?

Biden hopes that by sending more oil into the marketplace, gas will cost less at the pump. Studies show that when there is a large supply of a product, such as gasoline, the price decreases. Lowering prices is especially important for people who spend a large portion of their income on gas.

Why are prices so high?

Economic experts say the Russian invasion of Ukraine, which began on February 24, is the top reason for the rapid rise in gas prices. Russia is a major producer of oil, but less is available due to the sanctions (penalties) that nations around the world have imposed. As a result, gas prices in the US jumped by almost 20% in the first two weeks of the war. Since 2021, gas prices have also increased as pandemic restrictions were lifted and people resumed their regular activities.

What will happen next?

The release of the extra oil could provide short-term relief by modestly decreasing the price of gas at the pump. Experts predict the price of fuel will remain higher than usual until the war ends.



WORD OF THE WEEK

HELIX

A helix is something that has a spiral shape. Its name comes from a Greek word meaning to "roll" or "wrap." A double helix describes the spiral structure of a molecule of DNA, the complex chemical that instructs how a living thing should grow and develop.



THE WEEK IN HISTORY

April 13, 1970

Apollo 13's space rescue begins

On April 13, 1970, an oxygen tank exploded on the Apollo 13 spacecraft, putting the lives of the US astronauts headed for the Moon in danger. Plans for the Moon landing were canceled. To keep the air system working, the astronauts used duct tape, plastic bags, and socks. Four days later, they safely splashed down in the Pacific Ocean while hundreds of millions of people watched on TV in relief.



A sailor confirms the astronauts landed safely.