Fueling a nation

America's relationship with oil is a long one. On the following pages, we take an in-depth look at how we got to where we are today.

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More than four months, The Columbia Missourian has reported extensively on the rising price of gas, government and community initiatives to move you out of your car and onto public buses and car pools and to consider alternative fuels. Almost on a weekly basis, we have been telling you about heating bills costing more this year than they ever have and ways to conserve energy from layering up instead of turning up your thermostat to pulling your curtains shut as an extra layer of home insulation.

There are two main themes here. First is our insatiable dependence on oil, and the politics behind the supply — such as deferring to home drilled and relying on the reliance on OPEC — have been developing longer than just the past few years. America's relationship with oil has the ability to begin its role in the Middle East to the traumatic effects of Hurricane Katrina, the price of the barrell has fluctuated and become an even greater cause of consternation. But America's dependence on oil and the politics behind the supply — such as deferring to home drilled and relying on the reliance on OPEC — have been developing longer than just the past few years.

America's relationship with oil has a history that seems to run on a repeat cycle. Jimmy Carter's speech on Oct. 1, 1979, asking the nation to turn down thermostats resonates later with higher heating bills this winter amongst other current conservation practices. So why are we facing the same problem again? Why haven't we learned from our mistakes in the past?

By looking at our relationship with oil and the problems we overcame as a nation in the past 50 years, we can hope to learn from them and perhaps change our attitude and dependence on oil. Looking for new energy alternatives and changing international politics is only a start.

Facts that determined the market (made with petroleum products) and still have not recovered today.

1) HELLA HOOPS & ROLLER SKATES

Plastic shoes that determined the market (made with petroleum products) and still have not recovered today.

2) MALORY MONROE

The swing of boys and her signature red hot slip (an oil byproduct) took the silver screen — and the nation — by storm.

3) ROCK 'N' ROLL

A mix of Southern blues and gospel music, the genre that had the nation moving presented to the world one Elvis Presley, whose smooth voice and gyrating hips made the '50s swing.

This construction photo from early 1951 shows the building of a bridge over the Hackensack River in Secaucus, N.J., on the unfinished New Jersey Turnpike. At first, speed limits on these new roadways were as high 80 mph. A national speed limit of 55 mph wasn't established until 1974.

The nation expands its highway system

As Dinah Shore sang in the Chevrolet jingle, “See the U.S.A. In Your Chevrolet,” it was almost an American duty to bundle the family into the car and explore the land of plenty.

Helping Americans to newly emerged destinations, like drive-through restaurants and drive-in movies, was the 70 mph to 85 mph speed limit.

Road trips were promoted by the automobile industry and combining errands into one trip was for the extremely frugal. Now, people are hesitant to go and go and do some little things even everyday."

Like many Americans, Malcom was enjoying the newfound freedom of automobile without the concern of an energy crisis and the high prices of the gas. The cost of a gallon of gas was almost half of today. The cost of a gallon of gas was almost half of today.

Driving was for suckers and driving for the cool cats.

In Your Chevrolet,” it was the 75 mph to 80 mph destinations, like drive-through restaurants and

9) SOUR FAMILIAR: AMERICA AND CARES

Like many of the things that marked the "good old days," the '50s was an era marred with oversuppression and poor planning.

President Eisenhower was a driving force in the 1950s to invest in the highway system over the railroad system, thus solidifying America's dependency on automobiles.

Today, as the gas prices are forcing people out of their cars and into car pools and alternatively fueled vehicles, such as the hybrid cars — two engines, one electric, one gas. The lack of a decent public transportation system is a question the U.S. forces in light of Eisenhower's decision during the '50s to invest in the highway system.

Endless highways solidified America's dependency on automobiles.

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Bicycles and community initiatives to move you out of your car and onto public buses and car pools and to consider alternative fuels. Almost on a weekly basis, we have been telling you about heating bills costing more this year than they ever have and ways to conserve energy from layering up instead of turning up your thermostat to pulling your curtains shut as an extra layer of home insulation.

Walking was for suckers and driving for the cool cats.

We would just take the road with speed.

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