

Can Technology Solve Our Foreign Oil Addiction?

Depending on the source of information, the entire world production of Oil is about 75 million barrels per day. Per our DOE, the USA consumes just over 20 million barrels per day or 26% of the world's oil every day. We are producing about 8 million USA barrels per day – thus we import 12 million barrels or 58% of what we use. <http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/usa.html>

The simple answer to the above question is NO – however not for the reasons you may think. Will \$3.00 per gallon solve the problem? How about \$4.00 or \$5.00? Ask any addict if the price of their poison will cause them to use less or quit and the truthful answer will be no, simply because they are addicted.

For more than 75 years we've spent trillions of dollars building roads, yet it still takes longer and longer to get from point A to B. We've added HOV lanes, commuter rails and trains, and expanded highways from two to four or more lanes and can anyone say they're happy with the current transportation facilities?

Ask your local, state, or federal government representative what their plans are to address the problem of higher oil prices and highway gridlock and you'll most likely hear the "pass-the-buck" routine. Of course the standard response is more money or lack of money – which has been the answer for as far back as I can remember. Frankly, I think money is part of the answer but certainly not the way we've been spending it.

Using the KISS principle, the real answer to the both the high price of oil and gridlock is to simply reduce the number of vehicles on the roads – every day. HOV is one way of trying this however it just seems to send more people on different and often longer routes to get to the same place. Toll roads, VRE, buses, alternative hours, etc. are all in play and one only needs to drive north on 29 to 66 to see the results of the these efforts.

I believe the solution has been staring us in the face since the mid '90s – yet we hear very little about it. Telecommuting technology can solve these problems! However, we need a paradigm shift in the way business and government think about telecommuting. We need both entities to shift their thinking away from attendance taking and focus on results. Sure, most business and governmental agencies have a telecommuting policy – but is it delivering results?

"We The People" need to demand more from our employers and government (at all levels) to make this solution work. We need "real" incentive programs in the form of sweeping tax savings for telecommuters - leading to employees driving to work only "two" days per week. In a perfect world, this would immediately result in a 60% reduction of Oil usage and 60% less vehicles on the road on any given day.

Even a 30% reduction would generate a ripple effect heard round the world – especially if the savings were focused on imported oil. Our entire transportation system would immediately see benefits across the board. Our environment would be cleaner, as we would certainly be producing less greenhouse gasses – especially if we're not sitting in traffic moving along at a snail's pace.

We also need to open the broadband markets and get real competition going for delivering broadband to every home and business in the USA, regardless of where they are located. This can certainly be achieved with fiber, cable, wireless, and satellite – yet it seems we're still dragging our feet in this area. Could it be politics? Again, open up the incentives to deliver these services much like the Rural Electrification Act and it will happen.

Ask yourself why "telecommuting" is not a top priority today and you might be surprised at the answers. Better yet – ask your employer and our various levels of government the same question and you might be shocked at the answers you're given. If telecommuting was the answer 10 years ago – before 9/11 and \$3.00/gallon gasoline why are we still struggling to make the changes needed to bring about a real change with such immense potential for positive improvements across the board?