



Gouged At The Pump

\$91. That's what it took to fill up my pick-up truck the other day. Since then, gas prices have risen another nickel. Five cents times my 23-gallon tank capacity, well, we'll just call it an even buck added on. At the risk of reader wrath and an onslaught of nasty e-mails accusing me of not being a real rider just because I own a pickup truck, have you ever tried to haul a load of garden soil on your motorcycle? I'm not gonna try. (But I'll probably get a letter from a reader that has.) Let's all plant a vegetable garden this year and save money on groceries. Great. We'll have tomatoes, cucumbers, corn, peas, squash, and peppers. But by the time you add in the cost of rounding up those plants and supplies, the store-bought veggies might actually be the bargain. Nevertheless, it's fun to watch them grow, so I paid for it.

the use of motorcycles and scooters for transportation, and to provide information about transportation riding to the public. And it needs our help. Ride to work more often, but don't stop there. Read that mission statement again and take it upon yourself to provide riding information to the public. Go to www.RideToWork.org and check out the support material. There's even a template for postcards you can print on your home computer and hand to that guy filling up his Hummer H3 at the next gas island. Just imagine the look on his face when he sees you filling your tank for \$12 and he has to scrounge through his ashtray to make up the 91 bucks he needs, or make that 92 now.

In a staff meeting earlier this week, one of my colleagues actually tried to reason that it may be cheaper for him to drive his econo-box to work

**The Ride to Work Day Mission Statement:
to advocate and support the use of motorcycles
and scooters for transportation...**

Yes, I have a pickup truck, and, yes, I drive it when I need to: home repairs, rescuing friends on broken-down bikes, delivering packages. And at that, it's not too bad on gas mileage as far as trucks go. I get 20 mpg; I've seen worse. But lately, I sure have been enjoying riding to work, especially on

the fleet of Piaggio MP3s that we've had here at the office. Several staffers and I have had gas mileage competitions to see who could garner the best distance and sip the least fuel. The ever-popular Ride To Work Day is quickly approaching; mark July 16 on your calendars. While you're at it, mark as many more as you can for the same purpose. The new 2008 RTW logo corresponds with the MP3's in that RTW has emblazoned its latest poster with a caricature of a step-through scooter. The Ride to Work Day Mission Statement: to advocate and support

rather than a motorcycle. He bantered on about the cost of two bike tires vs. four car tires, and how he gets more longevity from his car tires. It was everything I could do to keep from disowning him. Yes, motorcycle tires usually don't last as long as car tires, and, yes, some motorcycle tires are very expensive. But let's not forget that the four-wheeled vehicle may have twice the amount of oil in its crankcase (and have you seen the price hike in 10W-30 lately?), and my colleague's compact car has four times the amount of spark plugs as the MP3 I cruised in on. And I haven't seen \$1 spark plugs since the '80s. As a matter of fact, I just called the auto parts store, and spark plugs for said econo-bucket are iridium and go for \$28.22 each, which adds up to \$112.88 a set. Good thing he didn't get the V-6 option. And none of this takes into account pollution emissions.

I've even tried to balance my household budget by using public transportation. Believe it or not, for my 42-mile commute (one way), taking the train isn't more economical. The train ride itself may be cheaper, but my local station doesn't offer free parking. Tack on \$8 for parking per day and the budget gets blown. Parking lot security is questionable, and I'd be real disappointed if I found my truck or bike missing at the train station. It's a long walk to my house. All in all, riding to work really does make sense.

RB

