

For more information about oil heat, please visit
www.oregonoilheat.com.

Or, contact the Oregon Oil Heat Help Desk at
503.546.5501 or **helpdesk@oregonoilheat.com**





What Goes Up, Must Come Down

Homeowners who were persuaded by an aggressive marketing campaign by the natural gas companies to undergo the expensive process of converting from oil to gas may now be chagrined to find that it will take years to recoup the costs (if at all). That's because crude oil prices, which reached a record high of \$147 a barrel in mid-2008, have fallen to historic lows as the recession in the U.S., Europe and Japan curbs fuel use. Furthermore, the new Administration is expected to reform the oil markets to prevent additional price run-ups due to speculation, a situation featured in a recent episode of **60 Minutes** (view at <http://tinyurl.com/78dkk4>).

Whether prices are going up or down, you can rest assured that your heating oil dealer has your best interests in mind. These local, independent companies (many of which are family owned) compete with one another to remain competitive. In addition, Oregon's heating oil dealers typically don't buy on futures contracts. Instead, they buy fuel on the spot market which means that they buy what they need at the rack rate—and aren't passing along the high prices charged last summer which can't be said for other energy sources. ♦

Upgrade Your Home and Save with Economic Stimulus Bill Benefits

This past February, President Obama signed an economic stimulus bill that made significant changes to the energy efficiency tax credits. Now you can add high-efficiency air conditioning to your oil heat system and save up to \$1,500 of your tax bill. Likewise you can qualify for a tax credit with energy-saving upgrades to your hot water boiler, windows, doors, and home insulation materials. Here's a summary of the changes to the energy efficiency tax credits:

- The tax credit has been raised from 10% to 30% for 2009 and extended through 2010.
- The tax credits for a specific dollar amount have been converted to 30% of the cost.
- The maximum credit has been raised from \$500 to \$1,500.

Because there are income limits to these tax credits, check with your tax advisor before making a purchase. For a more complete explanation of the tax bill and the products that it covers, go to the Energy Star website (www.energystar.gov). ♦

Tip: The Best Time to Buy Heating Oil

Fill your tank now while prices are low! We don't know what oil prices will be in the coming months, but heating oil is currently about \$3.00 less per gallon than last summer. Take advantage of these low prices and fill your tank now rather than waiting until fall when prices may rise. ♦





Questions About Buying or Selling an Oil Heated Home?

The professional staff at Oregon Oil Heat Help Desk (www.oregonoilheat.com) is qualified to answer questions about all aspects of the sale or purchase of an oil-heated home, including:

- Environmentally Friendly Biodiesel Options
- Conversion Facts
- Storage Tank Questions
- DEQ Regulations
- Soil Testing
- Equipment Maintenance

Please contact them at 503-546-5501 on weekdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. or send questions to helpdesk@oregonoilheat.com. ♦

Real Estate 101

As the weather gets warmer, thoughts turn to real estate. Here a few important facts to keep in mind:

- You do not need to convert your home to natural gas in order to sell it. In fact, the Consumer Energy Council of America, a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting the best interest of consumers, has concluded that it is financially unwise for consumers to convert from oil to gas heat. That means staying with oil heat saves you and your buyer money.
- When you sell your home, you do not need to decommission your oil tank. Also, soil samples are not required by law to sell a home (samples or tank testing are only required when an underground tank is suspected of leaking, or if oil is known to have leaked into the ground).
- If a buyer or lender asks you to take a soil sample, contact your oil heat dealer for the name of a trusted tester. Unfortunately, some companies that do soil samples have a vested interest in finding a problem because they make their money on the clean up.
- If you are buying an oil heated home, you can ask a seller to provide a tank service contract as part of the sale (contracts are transferable to a new homeowner in a real estate sale). In Oregon, tank service contracts cover costs up to \$4,000 dollars for tank replacement and cleanup in the event of storage tank failure.

Contact your local oil heat dealer who can direct you to a knowledgeable real estate agent who can answer all your questions about buying or selling a home heated with oil. ♦

The Buzz on Biodiesel

Biodiesel has been getting a lot of attention as more people get excited about this environmentally friendly, domestically produced fuel.

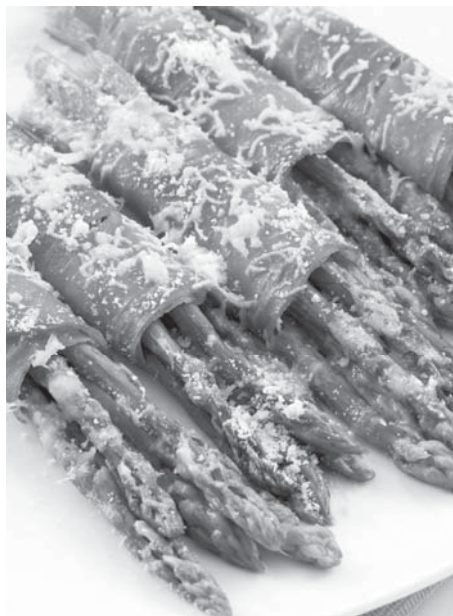
It is made from organic vegetable oils such as soy and canola, which are grown here in the U.S. When mixed with regular heating oil, biodiesel produces a renewable energy source that is every bit as warm as cozy as the heating oil that you are using right now. Many customers who had considered converting to natural gas have stayed with their oil heat system because they like the idea of a “green” fuel that is produced in America. It also gives them a choice of who they purchase their fuel from, unlike natural gas customers who must deal with a big utility.

Some of the biodiesel terms that you might hear are B20 and B5. A B20 blend, for example, contains 20% soy or canola oil mixed with 80% regular heating oil, whereas a B5 blend is 5% soy or canola. And while 5% may not seem like a lot, if everyone using heating oil used a B5 blend, more than 400 million gallons of regular heating oil could be conserved! This would be a significant step towards conserving oil and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

The best news is that you don't have to make any significant modifications to your current burner or tank to begin using biodiesel. And since biodiesel is delivered just like regular heating oil, you don't have to change your budget plan, payment plan, service contract or warranties. In fact, biodiesel naturally cleanses and lubricates your heating system, potentially lowering cleaning costs and extending the life of your equipment. ♦



Fresh Spring Recipe: Prosciutto Wrapped Asparagus



For a special Spring side dish, all you need are a few spears of asparagus, some slices of prosciutto, and a bit of creamy Neufchatel cheese. Make more to create an appealing appetizer tray.

Prep Time: 30 Minutes **Servings:** 4

INGREDIENTS:

1/2 pound prosciutto, sliced
1/2 (8 ounce) package Neufchatel cheese, softened
12 spears fresh asparagus, trimmed

DIRECTIONS:

1. Preheat oven to 450° F (230° C).
2. Spread prosciutto slices with Neufchatel cheese. Wrap slices around 2 or 3 asparagus spears. Arrange wrapped spears in a single layer on a medium baking sheet.
3. Bake 15 minutes in the preheated oven, until asparagus is tender.

Recipe provided by www.AllRecipes.com. Recipe submitted by Trish. ♦