get cozy
(THE NEW OIL HEAT)

Energy Speculation Hurts Everyone

Homeowners are breathing a sigh of relief as heating oil prices cool down with the weather. With oil prices significantly lower than what they were back in July 2008, staying warm and cozy this winter will be much more affordable.

Still, we are not immune to the possibility of another energy bubble. Wildly fluctuating prices hurt all of us by making it more expensive to fill our cars, heat our homes and run our businesses. For that reason, heating oil dealers across the state are calling on Congress to end uncontrolled oil speculation by restoring fair and open energy markets.

Every time you buy gasoline or heating oil, you are impacted by an unregulated commodities market into which speculators pour billions of dollars. Speculators operate by buying large amounts of oil and then selling it to each other with no intention of ever taking physical delivery of the product. Thanks to weak regulations and loopholes, contracts for oil may trade more than 20 times with the price going up every time. So who picks up the final tab? Family-owned heating oil dealers, local gas station owners and the people who buy from them—consumers and businesses trying to make ends meet while paying artificially inflated prices.

Last year's energy bubble helped provoke the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. Yet despite the public outrage, Congress failed to enact new regulations on commodities trading. You can join your local heating oil dealer in telling Congress that it's time to act by visiting **www.stopoilspeculationnow.com**. The last thing anyone wants to see is speculators pocketing stimulus dollars intended to fund Oregon's economic recovery.

*To read more on the topic of speculation and how it affects all of us, read Molly Brady's article in the Oct. 12 issue of The Oregonian (click on **http://tinyurl.com/yjl6qq5**). Molly is President of the Oregon Petroleum Association which represents the interests of heating oil dealers and their customers across the state.*

Spread the Warmth

Chances are, your local heating oil dealer is owned and operated by people who live and work where you do. When you call, you get a company that values your business and believes in old-fashioned customer service—not a nameless, faceless utility. And since oil heat companies compete with one another for your business, you can be assured that they keep their prices as low as possible.

Your local heating oil dealer would appreciate hearing from you about the service that you receive. Also, please consider logging onto one of the many consumer review websites that let you share your opinions and experiences with others. Sites include Angie's List, CitySearch, Yelp! and Google Reviews, among others.

Heating Oil Facts & Figures

1. The average annual fuel consumption of oil heat equipment in 1973 was 1,294 gallons; today it is less than half of that thanks to conservation efforts and a variety of modern technological advancements.

2. If you dropped a lit match into a barrel of oil, the match would go out as if you dropped it in water. Oil must be turned into a fine-particle mist before it will ignite and burn, typically at a temperature of 140 degrees.

3. Today's storage tanks are made from corrosion-resistant materials such as fiberglass and high grade steel. Properly installed and maintained, they have much longer lives than old, poorly constructed tanks. In addition, many people opt for above-ground tanks in a yard, basement, garage or crawl space for even greater peace of mind.

4. The Consumer Energy Council of America has found that it almost always make sense to stick with oil instead of converting to natural gas. Conversion is an extremely expensive process, and new gas furnaces have a life span of 15 years compared to the 30 years of a new, state-of-the-art oil heat system.

5. Home heating oil burns 400 degrees hotter than natural gas—so your home gets warm faster and stays warm longer.

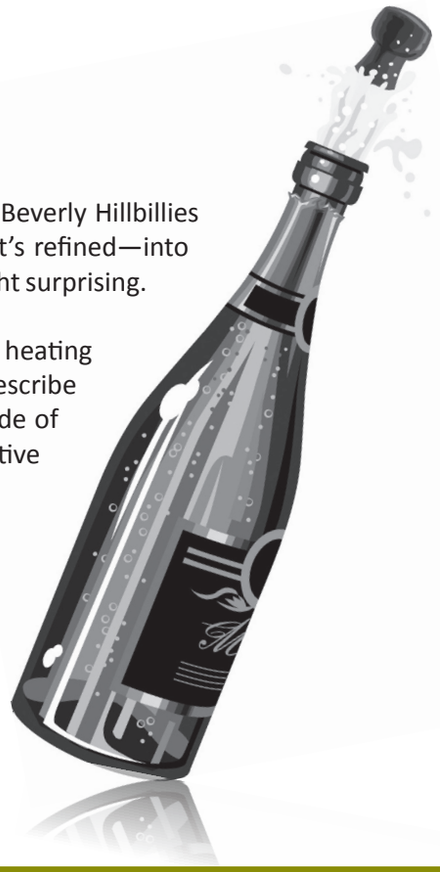
What's Champagne Got to Do With Oil Heating?

The thick black oil that once bubbled up out of the ground for Jed Clampett of the Beverly Hillbillies could never heat your home. In fact, straight crude oil is pretty boring. But when it's refined—into products like gasoline, jet fuel and No. 2, No. 4 or No. 6 heating oil—it can be downright surprising.

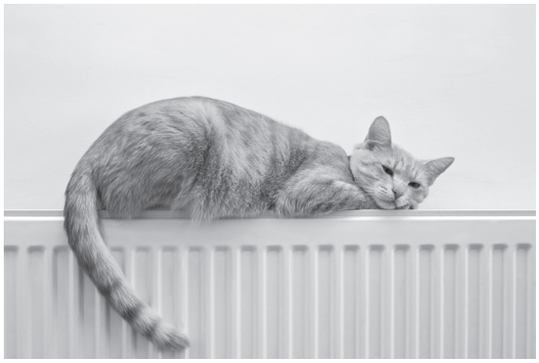
Homeowners burn No. 2 heating oil—the cleanest and most refined of the three heating oil grades. No. 2 heating oil can be distinguished by its color which some people describe as something between "cranberry" and "pink champagne." As the most refined grade of heating oil, No. 2 oil burns much cleaner than its oil "relatives" and has little negative impact on the environment.

Used with a technologically advanced oil heat system, No. 2 heating oil produces near-zero levels of particulate matter during the combustion process. It also generates a whopping 138,000 Btu's of heating energy for every gallon burned, allowing homeowners to enjoy high comfort levels and great value.

Courtesy of NORA



"Spot Check"



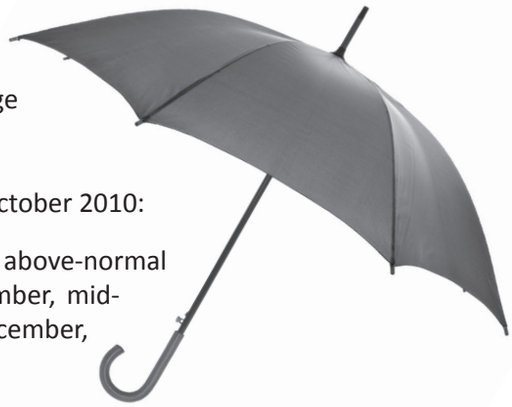
Sometimes people see dark spots or streaks on the walls of oil-heated homes and mistakenly assume they are caused by "dirty" heating oil. This is a myth—home heating oil is a clear, non-toxic and biodegradable liquid that burns at a level of overall cleanliness approaching 99.9%. Instead, these marks are an indication that the furnace may need a tune-up by a qualified oil heat technician. This will likely take care of the problem and increase the efficiency of the furnace, too.

Another source of sooting is common household dust that has been "baked on" walls and other surfaces near heating vents, radiators or baseboards. To prevent these streaks and spots, dust around baseboards, vents or radiators, especially during the heating season.

Thermostat 101

A programmable thermostat that is properly installed can save as much as $100 off your annual heating bills. Ideally, it should be mounted on an inside wall about five feet from the floor and away from other heat sources, such as a lamp or a television. Also make sure that the thermostat is not in an area prone to drafts, such as near a door or window as this can lead to false temperature readings.

What's In Store for the Year Ahead?



Did you know that the Old Farmer's Almanac is the oldest continuously published periodical in the U.S.? Since 1792, the Almanac has combined local folklore with a "super-secret" scientific formula to produce long-range forecasts that have an 80% accuracy rating.

Here's the forecast for the Pacific Northwest weather for November 2009 to October 2010:

- Winter temperatures and precipitation will be near normal, on average, with above-normal snowfall. The coldest periods will occur in early to mid- and late December, mid-January, and early to mid-February, with the snowiest periods in mid-December, early January, and mid-February.
- April and May will be warmer than normal, with near-normal rainfall in Washington and drier-than-normal conditions elsewhere.
- Summer will be drier than normal, with below-normal temperatures, on average, in Washington and above-normal temperatures in California and Oregon. The hottest periods will occur in late June and mid-July.
- September and October will be warmer and drier than normal.

Source: www.almanac.com

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**

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