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Will High Gas Prices Bring Boom In Telecommuting?

By Mike Wendland

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With the Internet, as this post proves, it is possible to do your job from just about anywhere. Think about it: If you could live anywhere and still do your job, would you live where you are now?

I'd live up here. In the UP. Somewhere Up North. You may choose elsewhere. But with gas prices continuing their rise, lifestyles are adjusting. Businesses and employers are going to need to be flexible to keep trained workers. Telecommuting, I predict, is going to boom because of the gas price crisis. Some will work from home. Other smart communities will build telecommuting centers, high-tech office buildings with high-speed connectivity, and commuter work spaces and cubicles for lease.

The \$170 I've spent -- two tanks to get up here, another tank while working -- will have to be repeated when I head home. That will be \$340 for gas to get here and back. Who can afford that?

If gas goes to \$5 a gallon as many predict within the year, even commuting from Detroit's far-out suburbs will bring weekly bills that will choke. From Rochester to downtown is about an 80-mile round-trip. Figure 20 miles a gallon and you burn two gallons of gas one-way, or \$20 door-to-door round-trip. Per day. Multiply that times five and you're talking \$100 a week.

And what if gas goes past \$5 a gallon?

See why telecommuting for many jobs makes sense?

And if you can telecommute from Rochester, why not Traverse City? Or East Tawas? Or Crystal Falls?