

16th District hopefuls focus on energy

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CRYSTAL LAKE – U.S. Rep. Don Manzullo on Monday unveiled a 12-point plan that ranges from personal responsibility to tough international policy that he said would help consumers battle record-high gas prices.

His Democratic challenger, meanwhile, envisioned a time when all new cars could run for about 30 miles off electricity.

Still a third hopeful for the 16th District House seat advised residents to go on an “energy diet” and suggested that the country should transition away from fossil fuels to embrace renewable energy sources.

On Monday, crude oil prices shot over \$120 a barrel for the first time in history, as the candidates unveiled their politically charged energy proposals.

“This is [not] the time for more polarization,” Manzullo said. “It’s not the time to say, ‘If you’re for conservation, you do this, or if you’re for business, you do that.’”

Rather, Manzullo called for a mix of short-term and long-term policies that he said would balance the country’s ecological and economic worries.

Among his proposals, he cited tax incentives for motorists who buy fuel-efficient hybrid cars; a tough assistance policy for oil-producing countries that don’t support reasonable gas prices; more domestic oil and gas exploration; and a summer break in both the state and federal gas tax.

Manzullo jabbed at economists who have called the gas-tax holiday, a favorite of presidential hopefuls Hillary Rodham Clinton and John McCain, political pandering.

“The best economists are the people who have to travel 25 miles every day to go to work,” he said.

It’s those people who would most benefit from developing hybrid technology, said Bob Abboud, Manzullo’s Democratic challenger and Barrington Hills village president.

Abboud, who also is a nuclear engineer and supporter of a gas-tax break, said that if he were elected, he would push legislation to further the development of gasoline-electricity vehicles. Motors are at their most inefficient, Abboud said, in about the first 35 miles – about the same distance he said a car could run on a fully-charged electric battery.

His proposal also called for the creation of an American Power Authority. That agency, which would use nuclear power to generate electricity, would support the increased electrical demands of the growing hybrid fleet, Abboud said.

“It’s a moon-shot program in terms of national will,” Abboud said. “I appreciate that a lot of people are ...[thinking], ‘Oh my God, this makes my head explode when I think about this.’ But we [wouldn’t] get here overnight.”

Green Party candidate Scott Summers doesn’t see the need for nuclear.

“To me, it’s not so much sustainable or renewable, but smart energy,” Summers said. “I am calling fossil fuels and nuclear energy dumb energy.”

Rather than rely on traditional sources, the Harvard attorney and McHenry County College trustee said the country should embrace hydraulic, wind and solar power. He said every consumer should take personal responsibility for his or her energy use.

“We as a society need to go on what I call an energy diet,” Summers said. “We use more energy than ... the entire world, and we have to be more thoughtful, myself included.”

What it means

As gas prices continue to skyrocket, the three candidates for the U.S. House 16th District seat have been stumping, lately, on energy policies that would help ease consumers’ energy woes. On Monday, the price of crude oil hit a record-high \$120 a barrel.

The following is a brief synopsis of the different candidates’ proposals:

U.S. Rep Don Manzullo

The Egan Republican unveiled a 12-point plan that includes tax incentives for motorists who buy fuel-efficient vehicles such as hybrids; a tough stance on assistance for oil-producing countries that don't support reasonable gas prices; increased domestic oil and gas exploration; and a break in both state and federal gas taxes.

Barrington Hills Village President Bob Abboud

Abboud, a Democrat and nuclear engineer, also supports a break in the gas tax. But on a larger scale, he said he would push legislation that would create incentives for hybrid technology for automobile manufacturers and create a new power authority that would allow for increased electricity needs.

Harvard attorney and McHenry County College Trustee Scott Summers

Green Party candidate Scott Summers said the country needed to move away from its reliance on fossil fuels and nuclear energy and embrace more hydraulic, wind and solar energy. He also called on residents to go on an "energy diet," reassessing where they could cut their personal reliance on fuel sources.

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