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## Congressional race focuses on energy

By Stuart R. Wahlin, Staff Writer

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With the price of oil having reached a historic \$100 per barrel Jan. 2, incumbent U.S. Rep. Don Manzullo (R-16) and his Democratic challenger Robert Abboud differ as to where responsibility lies for the mounting energy crisis.

Abboud, a nuclear engineer by trade and village president of Barrington Hills, issued a press release calling for an effective energy policy from Congress the day after oil hit its record high.

"This new oil price will soon translate to staggering gasoline prices at the pump and raise the costs of electricity," said Abboud, who believes reduced fuel costs are vital to the country remaining globally competitive and secure. "I am shocked that our current congressman has allowed our country's security to fall into the hands of foreign interests."

Manzullo spokesman Rich Carter questioned Abboud's timing, and the challenger's finger-pointing.

"Per-barrel oil prices have been flirting with \$100 for months, and Congressman Manzullo has documented the lack of domestic production for years, as well as a way to rid our dependence on expensive foreign oil that jeopardizes our national security," Carter stated. "If there is anyone to blame for \$100-per-barrel oil, it is our opponent's Democrat party that refuses to let us vote on legislation to increase domestic production of energy and end our dependence on costly foreign oil that threatens our national security."

Both candidates say they support alternative and renewable energies, along with less dependence on foreign oil. Manzullo,

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however, voted against both the renewable energy conservation Tax Act of 2007 (H.R. 2776) and the New Direction for Energy Independence, National Security and Consumer Protection Act (H.R. 3221) Aug. 4, 2007. Both measures passed the House, but have yet to be voted on in the Senate.

Abboud, who favors further domestic development of nuclear technology to reduce dependence on foreign energy, argued: "Affordable access to clean energy is critical to the quality of life and security of our nation, and we must break free from our addiction to oil. Much of our oil supply comes from foreign sources."

Abboud is calling for a drastic cut in the use of non-renewable energy sources by 2015.

Manzullo, however, feels, "We need a balanced energy bill that encourages more domestic supplies of gasoline and natural gas while expanding the development and use of renewable and alternative energies."

Abboud, who pledged to stand up to Big Oil lobbyists if elected, added "I will introduce and pass comprehensive energy policy legislation that will significantly expand the development and use of cost-efficient, domestically built, nuclear and other renewable energy sources to make our country energy independent and protect the environment." He added such legislation would drop electricity, natural gas, heating oil, and gasoline prices well below current levels.

Manzullo voted against a Democratic energy bill Dec. 6, because it did not address increased domestic production. A press release issued by Manzullo the same day alleged what he called the "No-Energy Bill" would send gasoline and natural gas prices through the roof in northern Illinois.

"It makes no sense to strap our energy producers with new taxes and regulations without giving them the opportunity to produce more energy domestically," Manzullo said.

Manzullo has served the 16th Congressional District since 1993. Abboud will be the fourth challenger Manzullo has faced.

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