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MARGIN CALLS

Gas price relief could be coming

FUEL • Global gasoline prices have mostly risen in January, but some countries have seen signs they will ease into February as crude has fallen from its record highs and there is potential for a slowdown in demand, a Reuters survey showed.

European countries saw gasoline becoming more expensive, with U.K. prices hitting a record high. Prices in some other countries, including the United States and Japan, dropped.

By country, the costliest gasoline in dollar terms this month was in Europe's top oil producer, Norway.

The cheapest was Venezuela, at three cents US a litre. Saudi Arabia, the world's biggest oil exporter, was near the bottom in the 20-nation survey, with 12 cents a litre.

In the world's top consumer, the United States, the average retail gasoline price was \$3.07 a gallon (81 cents US per litre) last week, showing a 4.1 cent week-on-week drop for the first time in three weeks.

Anti-terror tool scares business

REGULATION • Two business groups urged the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission on Friday not to reinstate a web tool aimed at helping investors identify companies with investments in countries the United States designates as "sponsors of terrorism."

"This is the kind of thing that prompts companies to go somewhere else," said William Reinsch, president of the National Foreign Trade Council, which represents major U.S. corporations.

The SEC is seeking comment about whether to reinstate some kind of mechanism that would make it easier for investors to find out if a company has any business in or with countries that are designated by the U.S. government as "state sponsors of terrorism."

In July, the agency suspended its website search tool after criticism from lawmakers and business groups, who called it unfair and said it portrayed firms in a misleading light. At the time, the SEC said it would revamp the tool to more accurately reflect a company's activities.

HERALD ENERGY



Altex Energy CEO Jack Crawford is in race to ship Alberta bitumen to the Gulf Coast

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PARKING SERVICE SHIFTS INTO DRIVE



Park 2 Go co-owner Ayaz Kara, left, with fellow executives, left to right, Saleem Budhwani, Naushad Jiwani and John Auchie have started a parking service that offers a nine-minute door-to-door guarantee from the lot to the airport.

Park 2 Go shuttles valet perks to airport

Service aims to take grief out of parking

GINA TEEL
CALGARY HERALD

Air travel may be booming, but for many the process of getting to and from the airport can still be a slog if it involves parking.

A new business intends to turn that notion on its head with **Park 2 Go**, billed as Calgary's only off-site airport valet and shuttle service.

A newcomer to the satellite parking sector, Park 2 Go intends to woo customers by excelling in fast, efficient and affordable service in what it calls an alternative to traditional airport parking.

The company boasts a nine-minute guarantee on door-to-door shuttle service to the airport, and plans to introduce convenience-oriented perks for time-crunched travellers.

"If you look at Calgary, this is the only major airport in Canada that doesn't have off-site valet parking and the service that it deserves," said Ayaz Kara, one of five owners of Park 2 Go and chief executive of **Prestige Hospitality Inc.**, which is behind the development.

With Calgary poised to become the third-largest airport in the country in terms of traf-

fic, Kara said "it needs to come up to those big leagues" with the service that's provided.

Located just north of the Calgary International Airport at Barlow Trail and 100th Avenue N.E., the Park 2 Go lot can hold 2,000 cars, with the capacity to stack up to 3,000 vehicles.

At \$11.95 per day and \$69.95 per week, plus GST, Kara said Park 2 Go's rates are competitive with **Park and Jet**, another off-site parking service. Park and Jet's rate is \$11.95 a day and \$71.70 per week, plus GST, according to its website. Rates at **Park'N Fly** are \$13.95 per day or \$69.75 per week, plus GST.

There's a valet service at the airport, **Auto Stop Valet**. Rates there are \$41.95 a day, plus GST.

There's also regular parking at the Calgary International Airport.

"The expression we use around here is, we park everybody," said Bryce Paton, spokesman for the Calgary Airport Authority.

"For example, this past Christmas, we had ample parking. Parking was just not an issue."

Currently, there's a total of 5,900 stalls between the seven-level parkade and surface parking, with plans for more parking including an expansion at the parkade to add 2,000 stalls in 2009. There have also been additions to various short-term parking options as well.

However, Paton noted satellite parking lots normally offer a price differential "and you weigh against that the convenience of parking adjacent to

Parking at the Calgary airport

Rates

OFF-SITE LOTS

- Park 2 Go — \$11.95 per day and \$69.95 per week plus GST;
- Park and Jet — \$11.95 a day and \$71.70 per week, plus GST;
- Park'N Fly — \$13.95 per day or \$69.75 per week, plus GST.

AT THE AIRPORT

- Auto Stop Valet. Rates are \$41.95 a day;
- Seven level parkade — \$24 daily maximum rate and a \$120 weekly maximum, GST included.

the terminal."

The airport's seven-level parkade has a \$24 daily maximum rate and a \$120 weekly maximum, GST included.

Kara said Park 2 Go is banking on top-notch service to win customers. The business operates four 15-seat shuttle buses to assist in meeting its time guarantee. Valets are on hand at the Park 2 Go site to assist customers with their luggage and take care of their vehicle while they're away. When customers return to the airport, Kara said, they can call, e-mail or text Park 2 Go, to ensure shuttle buses are there to meet them at designated spots.

"And when you come back, your car will be ready — it will be cleaned off, it will be started if it's cold outside, the snow will be removed and then when you arrive here we help you put your bags in the car. There's valet attendants to help you do that, and you pay and away you go," he said.

Leroy Bangen, Park 2 Go's general manager, said security is another element of the service — "Especially as it pertains to maybe single females that are travelling back and it's late at night. As opposed to them going out and getting their own car, we go out and get it for them," he said.

The Park 2 Go office is located in a trailer on the site, but plans are to build a 100,000-square-foot permanent enclosure where they'll offer car wash and detailing services, and concierge-type services such as dry cleaning drop-off and pickup. Oil changes may be added later.

Details of the permanent structure are being finalized, Kara said.

Park 2 Go opened Dec. 6 and Kara said the feedback from customers has been great. They really love the time savings, he added.

Park 2 Go is the first initiative of a larger-scale development project on the property, Kara said. **Prestige Hospitality** owns about 14.5 hectares of land and plans to fully develop it, he said.

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CHARLES FRANK
BUSINESS EDITOR

Flaherty scores points on mergers

It isn't often federal Finance Minister Jim Flaherty can venture into Calgary and garner a round of applause.

In fact, ever since the infamous Halloween Massacre on Oct. 31, 2006 — when Flaherty, on behalf of Stephen Harper's Tories, pulled the rug out from under the nation's unsuspecting income trusts and those Canadians who had invested in them, after having promised to leave them intact — he's been persona non grata in this neck of the woods.

That the finance minister has also been travelling around the country tub-thumping for a single national securities regulator (likely to be located in Ontario) hasn't done much to help upgrade his image out here in the West, either.

In spite of all that, Flaherty earned a small measure of grudging support this week when he resoundingly rebuffed the latest efforts by the country's major chartered banks to have the government open the door to mergers — an idea the federal Liberals kiboshed a decade ago when it was all the rage.

And rightly so. At the time, there were valid concerns about how the outcome of any possible mergers might restrict consumer access and choice by reducing the number of outlets serving Canadians, particularly in smaller centres, something the industry vehemently denied at the time and continues to pooh-pooh today.

Those concerns are still there, of course — as anyone outside of a major city who has ever needed a significant commercial or business loan can attest.

That's especially true in provinces not as fortunate as we are here in Alberta, where consumers can turn to **ATB Financial**, the quasi-government operated financial institution, for our banking needs — or the **Canadian Western Bank**, should we so desire. And to an extensive network of credit unions that offer many similar services.

Today, however, worries about access and service are overshadowed by a more disturbing and pernicious concern brought on by the ongoing tremors emanating from the subprime mortgage crisis in the United States — an infectious condition that has struck major banks around the world to varying degrees, including virtually all of Canada's chartered banks.

Some more than others, of course.

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