

# Valley businesses find ways to save gas

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• By: Hatzel Vela

GLENDALE, AZ - With the price of gasoline continuing to rise, two Valley business owners have found ways to make fewer trips to the pump.

The bad economy has been good to Ted Nuttle, but with all the driving he does his gas expenses were adding up.

As a Fibrenew franchise owner, Nuttle repairs furniture in Glendale.

He bought the franchise in 2007 and business has since been growing steadily.

"It has been amazing," Nuttle said from his home, where he runs his business.

Work has been so good Nuttle can barely keep up with the appointments.

At times, he works seven days a week.

"It seemed like people were fixing more things rather than throwing them away and buying new," Nuttle said.

Typically, a customer can save 25 to 30 percent if they decide to fix the piece of furniture instead of buying something new, according to Nuttle.

But rising gas prices have presented a new challenge.

"We have had weeks where we traveled a thousand miles," said Nuttle. "And driving that van, it makes maybe 17 miles to the gallon. Adds up in a hurry."

He estimates between \$150 and \$200 a week in gas expenses.

Nuttle doesn't want to pass on the buck to his customers, so he has found ways to save gas.

He's grouping pick ups and service requests based on geographic areas.

He also asks customers to send pictures via e-mail, so he can assess the damage without having to take a trip.

It used to be they would take a trip any time they needed materials from their suppliers. Now, they wait until they absolutely need the material.

Across the Valley, Shaun Phelan owns Senior Helpers, a service that helps the elderly with daily chores at home.

At times, his caregivers take customers on errands.

So like Nuttle, he is encouraging his workers to group trips.

It's advice he follows himself.

"Looking at last year's numbers, it's up a little bit," said Phelan. "Maybe 20, 25 percent. So I'm very conscious."

How have you adapted your driving habits to save money on gas? Let us know by leaving a comment below.

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