

An Open Letter to the Candidates

by Rick Trawick

It seems everyone in the country is focused on two things, gas prices and the election. I don't want to get too political, (After all, this is a magazine about cars where we do all get along!) but let's discuss energy policy. So far, neither of the two major candidates has discussed a comprehensive energy policy. So I have prepared a policy for them. I will even go as far to say that if one of the candidates would get behind this policy, I am sure they will win in November. So listen up you guys, and don't forget me when you are looking to fill that energy secretary position.

- 1. Begin immediately to construct a minimum of 10 new nuclear power plants.** Electricity will be THE energy need in the future. It is clean and efficient. And while solar and wind generation methods may be ultimate in clean-generation, nuclear gives significantly more power for the money and take much less space. As plug-in hybrid vehicles lead to a resurgence in pure electric vehicles, electricity will quickly become a critical motor fuel. Along with an increasing dependency on electric power in the home, America will need significantly more electricity than what we currently produce. The first thing we will hear folks say about this one is, "What about meltdowns! We can't have all that potential for nuclear explosions in our neighborhood!" It's amazing how one seriously technically flawed movie has influenced our energy policy. Modern design, careful oversight and a well-thought-out waste plan make nuclear the clear choice for near-term electric power generation. The second "fact" someone will throw out is, "It will take ten years before a project started today will come online!" This is a standard excuse from those who really don't want you to start at all. Well, we shouldn't have listened to you 10 years ago, but we better get started now.
- 2. Open the ANWAR area to oil exploration and drilling.** We have plenty of oil in Alaska to supply our need for the near term. Just opening the area to our oil companies will result in an immediate decrease in the world market price of crude. But the real benefit is the price of the world market doesn't really matter, we produce our own and we don't buy or sell on the world market.
- 3. Start the construction of at least 10 fuel refineries.** Even though many of the same objections you hear about the nuclear plants will be raised, a carefully planned expansion of our refining capacity is critical. The key point with each new plant is the refinery company will be required to build capacity for bio-fuel in the near-term and ultimately hydrogen in the future. By the end of each of these new refineries lifetimes, they will be producing 100% hydrogen. Now, before you raise the "We can't take food out of children's mouths to power our excess lifestyle!", please note that we are still paying farmers NOT to plant food crops. You may complain if we ever get to the point where capacity is truly an issue. Sure we should have started building these 10 years ago, but like I said, let's get started.
- 4. Heavily subsidize American companies developing new battery/fuel cell technology.** Forget a big prize plan, (sorry Senator McCain) but get the money out up front. The company(s) that succeeds will reap billions in profits and this is

technology that will put America in the forefront of automotive technology again. Plus, the technology will ripple-down in to homes and businesses and bring clean power generation on-site, eliminating the need for massive infrastructure improvements to our electrical grid. We are in a heap of trouble if, for example, the Chinese develops this stuff first.

5. **Develop mass transit where practical.** Evaluate the public transport infrastructure and work on improving it. For example, our passenger rail transport system used to be the example to the world, now it is a joke. Hire some of the managers of the Japanese rail system and give them Amtrak for a few years. Once the trains run on time as they do in Japan, folks will be able to see how economical it can be. Likewise, we need a major revamp in the way we are thinking about the airlines and air traffic in this country. If it continues along the path we are following, we will soon have folks calling for a nationalized air transport system. You don't want to fly AmSky do you?

This is just a start, but the ideas get more detailed and well, boring. As you can see, I am biased towards maintaining personal transportation, as we know it. It can be done. We have the resource and the technology to do it here in the United States. So let's get started!