

E-85 provides better fuel alternative to petroleum

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In recent years, there have been numerous concerns with rising gas prices due to the U.S. dependence on foreign countries for oil. Since September 11, 2001, gasoline prices have risen drastically from just over one dollar per gallon to reaching almost three dollars per gallon. Last year, in an attempt to lower the increasingly high gas prices in Illinois, Governor Rod Blagojevich announced that 500,000 dollars would be given to gasoline companies in order to establish E-85 facilities, according to *illinois.gov*.

According to *cleanairchoice.org*, E-85

is a new fuel alternative that is made up of 70 to 85 percent ethanol, which can be produced from natural

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-Scott McAlister
AP Economics Teacher

resources such as corn, and only 15 to 30 percent petroleum. E-85 can function as gasoline in flexible fuel vehicles, which are automobiles that can operate on multiple fuel blends and have been produced by car companies such as Ford, General Motors and Chrysler. More car companies should strive to make flexible fuel vehicles, and car consumers should purchase flexible fuel cars because E-85 is a less expensive alternative to gasoline. It would help the economy by lessening U.S. reliance on foreign countries. Using E-85 as a gasoline alternative would

also create a healthier environment because E-85 is less toxic than petroleum.

If more people began using E-85 to power their vehicles, the demand for oil from the Middle East would be reduced. “Obviously when nonrenewable resources are involved, will be a cost issue. For this country, the problem is that the U.S. relies on foreign countries for its oil,” said AP Economics teacher Scott McAlister. Unlike petroleum, E-85 is a renewable resource, so it would be much easier to avoid another oil shortage that the U.S. is currently experiencing.

According to *cleanairchoice.org*, the ethanol that is used in E-85 is made up of starch found in corn and cheese-making

byproducts. These resources are both very abundant in the U.S., especially in the Midwest. Therefore, if more people bought vehicles that run on E-85, the U.S. economy would improve, and the economies of the Midwestern states, including Illinois, would improve drastically. Car consumers that live in Illinois should strive to buy flexible fuel vehicles because of the good effects that E-85 would






have on the Illinois economy. If E-85 became more widely used in the U.S., the

extent.

It would be very beneficial to the environment if more people used E-85 to fuel their vehicles. According to *cleanairchoice.com*, E-85 reduces ozone-forming pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, and is less toxic than petroleum. Car consumers need to consider the benefits that using E-85 would have for the environment, and should strive to purchase flexible fuel vehicles, even if they are more expensive than vehicles that run on petroleum.

Car consumers need to push car companies to make more flexible fuel vehicles. Products that are higher in demand will become more commonly produced, and will therefore become less expensive. “If the public shows their willingness to buy flexible fuel vehicles, more car companies will make them, and if flexible fuel vehicles are high in demand, they will be become less expensive,” said McAlister. The government should provide companies that produce E-85 with more funding so that E-85 can become a more popular alternative. As a result, more car consumers would purchase flexible fuel vehicles as opposed to vehicles that run on petroleum.

Top five most fuel efficient cars of 2006

1. **Honda Insight**
 \$19,330-\$21,530
2. **Toyota Prius**
 \$21,725
3. **Honda Civic Hybrid**
 \$14,360-\$23,350
4. **Volkswagon Golf TDI**
 \$16,030-\$20,655
5. **Volkswagon Jetta TDI**
 \$17,900-\$24,865

Source: www.ford.com

Federal government wasted money, resources on Ryan corruption trial

LAUREN WEBER
STAFF WRITER

The federal racketeering and fraud trial of former Illinois Governor George Ryan is coming to a close as jurors deliberate to decide Ryan's fate. Ryan's trial has become a media circus and has been extended for far too long. The trial has generated enormous amounts of undeserved media attention, and federal money that could have been spent in a much more productive way was squandered.

Among the 22 counts that Ryan was indicted on are mail fraud and income tax fraud. Although these are criminal offenses, if Ryan is guilty of income tax fraud, it is not the worst crime Illinois has ever seen. In fact, from mobster Al Capone to late Secretary of State Paul Powell, crooked politicians often become the stuff of legend in historically ethics-challenged Illinois. Corruption and politics have been synonymous since the very beginning. The accusations against Ryan are not revolutionary or astounding, so there is no justification for Ryan's trial to receive as much attention as it already has.

The trial has also been extremely costly to the federal government. A six-year investigation preceded Ryan's indictment, and it involved four federal agencies: the Internal Revenue Service, the U.S. Attorney's Office, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Numerous people from each agency questioned over 1,000 witnesses and produced hundreds of thousands of documents from these interviews. Approximately 100 witnesses were put on the stand during Ryan's trial to testify for



Objection The government has irresponsibly wasted huge sums of money on Ryan's fraud trial.

the prosecution, which means that the federal government had agents use valuable time to prepare these witnesses to testify. Finally, four trial lawyers and four agents were in the court at all times during the trial. The amount of taxpayer dollars wasted on the trial is astronomical.

It seems fair to assume that the federal government has spent a total amount close to or above what Ryan's defense cost. On November 14, 2005, Former Governor James Thompson, chairman of the law firm

of Winston & Strawn, which is defending Ryan, stated that the cost of the defense had reached 10 million dollars, according to the *Chicago Tribune*. Published estimates have since speculated that the fees have risen to as much as 20 million dollars. However, Winston & Strawn is defending Ryan pro bono. The federal government is draining enormous sums of taxpayer money to do battle with Ryan's ace defense team, while the former governor is not paying a single cent. “There is no public official I know of who has worked in public service his entire career who could afford to defend himself [in this type of case],” said Ryan's defense attorney Dan Webb to *Chicago Business*. The federal money would have been much better spent on education, health programs, or even ethics reform.

Ryan's federal racketeering and fraud trial should never have received as much attention as it did, and the federal government should not have expended such large amounts of money and resources on this trial. The media attention and federal money could have been devoted to much worthier causes.

? Guess ?
? Who ?



GUEST COLUMNIST

Get to Know the Columnist: Joel is a Sophomore student in Journalism I who participates in swimming and cross country.

By Joel Dobben

Reality TV haters, rejoice!

For all of us, who have mourned the lack of any new, inventive fictional television shows, the times are beginning to change for the better.

A couple of years ago, I stopped watching TV simply because I was sick of tired of the countless reality shows being passed off by as quality entertainment by networks. Meanwhile, my friends got their kicks from watching supposedly “normal” people bicker with each other and battle for attention in front of cameras. I would just roll my eyes at my friends and vow to never watch popular TV again. I feel that reality shows put irritating and alarmingly volatile people together in creepy situations, and package it for the public's entertainment. Incredibly stupid shows like *The Apprentice*, *The Bachelor*, *American Idol*, and *The Amazing Race* had experienced great popularity, a sign that the end of the world was at hand.

Recently, however, scripted television is experiencing the beginning of a renaissance. The top rated shows on TV right now are *Lost*, *Desperate Housewives*, *Grey's Anatomy*, *House*, and *Two and a Half Men*. These shows have characters, scenarios, and dialogue that are clever, witty, and best of all, fresh. Last year, I slowly began to watch more and more TV again. *Lost*, my favorite show that takes up a large part of my Wednesday evening, is the most honored and acclaimed show on television. *Lost* is exciting science fiction with an intellectual twist. Besides offering terrific action, the show ponders the basic questions of existence, and features complex characters that are far from who they seem.

During the age of reality, television critics promoted basic cable shows like *The Sopranos*, *Sex and the City*, *The Wire*, and *Nip/Tuck*. These shows were labeled as edgier, inventive shows for more discerning viewers. Now, however, network shows like *Lost*, *Arrested Development*, and *The Office* have garnered the most critical praise and major awards. The television networks have finally realized that quality programming made by intelligent people can appeal to people of all ages.

The return of scripted television is not all great news, though. Ever present cop shows have become enormously popular. Overwrought and grisly trash like *CSI* and *Without a Trace* have now captured the fancy of the public. There are now countless spin-offs of *CSI* and *Law & Order*, each using some obscure area of police work as its scenario. Some of these shows are admittedly well made, but the over saturations of these programs give popular TV alarmingly little variety. Don't get me wrong, I would still rather watch a *CSI* spin-off than another reality show showcasing the worst humanity has to offer, even with all the cop shows...

With the return of fine programs that respect the intelligence of their audiences, maybe there is hope for television after all. Now it's time for me to go: my show is about to start.