

SMALL BUSINESS TECH NOTES

By James E. Gaskin, Network World
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OPINION

Patriotic Telecommuting

Local Dallas automotive radio talk show host Ed Wallace hit the big time with a story in BusinessWeek about how to increase the fuel efficiency of every vehicle on the road by nearly 5 mpg and dramatically drop the cost of gasoline within seven days. Appropriately titled, check out "[How to Solve Our Energy Issues-Fast](#)." Ed includes two approaches to solving the energy, or at least the gasoline, problem. The technically interesting proposal? More telecommuting. That dovetails nicely with Tim Greene's "[Telecommuters Lack Advanced Videoconferencing - For Now](#)" story here in Network World. Of course, we don't need videoconferencing for every telecommuter, because we don't see the faces of many of our customers and suppliers during the work day. Most don't even see faces of co-workers anymore. People are spread out to various offices or traveling so much, we never know where they are. We send and receive e-mail, text messages, instant messages, and actual voice calls from someone somewhere and think nothing about it.

Ed Wallace makes a great point for telecommuting support services in his BusinessWeek story. Yes, better broadband (our FCC sold us down the river when they declared putrid 200kbps DSL qualified as broadband) networks are expensive to install, especially in lightly populated areas. However, no fiber link costs as much as a highway or road. Build more highways and roads, or lay more fiber? More of the second will reduce the need for the first.

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