

## Is discounted gas legal in New Jersey?

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Now that the gas tax in New Jersey has been raised 23 cents a gallon, will some service stations try to come up with creative ways to lure customers in by offering different ways to save money at the pump?

It's possible, but don't count on it.

"It's because even with the 23-cent increase, motorists are still paying a lot less than they were used to paying," said Sal Risalvato, the executive director of the New Jersey Gasoline, C-Store and Automotive Association.

Up until 2012, New Jersey gas stations were not allowed to offer special deals and rewards on fuel and merchandise, but that year legislation was signed by Gov. Chris Christie that permits the practice.

"There are programs where different brands of gas are associated with supermarkets, that allow people to redeem points earned at supermarkets at the gas pumps," Risalvato said.

He said there are also other programs that let consumers who buy merchandise at different stores and through different service providers (such as AT&T) earn points for discounted gas.

"It certainly is good for motorists, and if it's good for motorists and it attracts them to make gasoline purchases at certain locations, then certainly it's good for the retailer as well," he said.

Risalvato said back in the 1950s, '60s and '70s, gas stations gave out S&H green stamps and plaid stamps that would be pasted into collection books. Once a certain amount were collected, they could be used to get free blenders, toasters, frying pans and other household items.

"Nobody is offering green stamps anymore. Plaid stamps and green stamps have gone the way of the dinosaur. We now do everything electronically," he said.

What about discounted gas on certain days of the week?

Risalvato said this is perfectly legal and it is being done in some locations.

"That is nothing more than a reduction of the price of a product as a promotion, and there is no law that would prohibit that, and if a retailer offers this kind of discount, they will be the ones to pay for it," he said.

He said this used to be a big, big draw.

"Back in the day when I had my Texaco station we used to have what we called Wacky Wednesdays, and we reduced the price of premium by 5 cents," he said.

"It was very popular, I do still see it, many of my members do still use that, maybe not as popular as it was, say 10 or 15 years ago," Risalvato said.