

# The Daily Star, Oneonta, NY - otsego county news, delaware county news, oneonta news, oneonta sports

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## Gas could be accelerant for economy

### Daily Star

---- — Chuck Pinkey is subbing this week for Tom Sears, who is out of the country. Sears' column will resume upon his return.

Upon returning from a meeting in southern Pennsylvania, we are heading north on Pennsylvania Route 61. This is by no means Interstate 88. Even routes 7 and 23 are bigger roads.

As expected, we find the usual Pennsylvania businesses, such as a 24-hour taxidermy store called U Shoot 'em \_ We Stuff 'em, Bubba & Bo's Tattoo parlor, a diner named Road Kill Cafe and my personal favorite, a gun shop called Ammos R Us. Gotta love Pennsylvania!

We are passing through villages named Pottsville, Cressona and Mt. Carbon. In this part of the world, all DNA is the same, but we begin to notice Walmarts, Cabelas, car dealers of every brand, Outback steakhouses, Harley-Davidson and BMW dealers and a dozen shopping malls!

Finally, we reach Interstate 81 and head north. (Why is it that I have to remind my wife that 81 is the route number, not the speed limit?) But every exit on I-81 is bustling with McDonald's restaurants, Burger Kings, truck stops, factory outlets, motels and hotels and more shopping malls!

Suddenly, the sky darkens. It is as if we entered the Twilight Zone. Hello, New York! After passing Binghamton, we hit I-88 and head east. If one exits at Port Crane, Sanitaria Springs, Belden Hill, Harpursville, Afton, Unadilla, Franklin or Otego, one would think he's in Kansas!

Maybe you can buy gas and gas station food at a few of these exits, but that is it. Yet in Pennsylvania, business is prospering. Why not here? I wonder if it has to do with taxes, business regulations, environmental laws or attitude? Maybe all of the above!

We are New York, the Empire State. We are so great, it is a wonder we need septic systems. Truth is we are corrupt, overtaxed, overregulated, bankrupt and we still don't get it!

For years, people have complained about businesses leaving our state. Ford, GE, IBM, General Motors and scores of others have moved from New York. Why? Why not, when they can make more money in North Carolina, Texas, Alabama and Pennsylvania? Whose fault is that? Ours!

Businesses will go to states where they can profit the most. As it should be, but New York state -- with our

infrastructure, natural resources, harbors and proximity to markets -- should outpace all others. With honest leadership, the correct priorities, less taxes, less regulations and some common sense, the tide can be turned.

Sadly, we do not see that happening. Here are a few small examples of why. We hear that New York will soon regulate emissions from outdoor wood stoves. Why not? Humans have only been burning wood since caveman days.

So what if it might add \$2,000 to the price of an outdoor wood stove. Heck, look at the job Washington has done with emissions on cars, trucks and farm tractors. This is New York! We can do wood stoves! What could possibly go wrong?

Secondly, I have a cousin in Kentucky who lives in a nice home on a couple of acres. Her taxes are \$120 per year. Here, that same property would be taxed at \$2,400. That's 20 times more, and for what? Their standard of living is certainly on par with ours, if not greater.

Thirdly, try building a home or business in New York state. With permits, environmental impact studies, storm water protection plans, engineering approvals, ridiculous tax levies and fees, etc., any sane man would long for Kentucky!

We have another interesting scenario brewing when it comes to gas drilling. Pennsylvania is booming, and New York is sitting on its hands. It seems as if daily, we are bombarded by naysayers, pundits and the timid who fear the world may end if we drill for gas. It reminds me of a cartoon showing the Titanic sinking and a man in the life boat screaming, "We have to ban trans-oceanic travel."

Is anything 100 percent safe? Of course not; accidents can and do happen, but if this exploration were dangerous, there would be a thousand examples of environmental or personal damage. There are not. Yet, some talking head, environmental zealot or scam artist will dream up or fabricate a disaster, and it will be reported as gospel, but when proven wrong, it will be ignored. According to farmers and machinery dealers in northern Pennsylvania, times are good. Jobs are plentiful, restaurants are busy, housing is at a premium and the royalties from gas drilling are being paid. This technology is not new. States like Pennsylvania, Texas, Oklahoma, Tennessee and Kentucky have done this for years, but in New York, we wring our hands and worry.

We are afraid. Fracking? Oh my goodness! What if this? What if that? It will only profit the selfish few. Give me a break! Sounds like Chicken Little is at it again!

You know, I have a question: New York state has squandered hundreds of billions -- if not a trillion -- dollars, on government giveaways, welfare, corruption, waste and absurd environmental legislation. Can you imagine the waste potential from all the taxes collected from gas drilling?

New York, it could be party time!

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