

IGNITE



LU's
New Political
Newspaper

Pirate Baby '08

MEET YOUR NEW CANDIDATE: PAGE 4



Mission Statement

Ignite is a non-partisan publication dedicated to promoting the free exchange of ideas in an environment where meaningful debate and ideological diversity are often lacking. We, its staff, seek to serve the Lindenwood community by infusing it with conservative, libertarian, and classical liberal thought. We adhere to the idea that rights are inherent to the human person, rather than granted by their government. By providing a public forum for healthy discourse within the community, *Ignite* promotes the ideas of liberty and personal responsibility. We invite the active participation of any student, regardless of political affiliation, to join us in cultivating political dialogue. We strive to inform, engage, and open the minds of our readers in doing so. Above all, our staff endeavors to *Ignite* the flame of liberty among the students of Lindenwood University.

IGNITE is not a publication of Lindenwood University. It is not supervised or managed by any employee of the University and does not necessarily reflect the views of the University. Lindenwood is not responsible for the content or opinions expressed herein.

IGNITE staff

Co-Editors-in Chief
Emily Platt • James Kintz

Design Editor
Chris Jewell

Information Editor
Jonathan Nevins

Staff Reporters
Michael Flierl • Matt Simpson
A.J. Medlock • Josh Hedlund
Josh Paine • Drew Carrier

Staff Researcher
Nathan Mayes

From the Editors The Spark

*Isn't there already a newspaper on campus?
Why we're here and what we want*

It even felt historic. Clad with a dowdy skirt and a spicy temper, I witnessed the gritty process of self-government as a delegate at the Republican State Convention in Branson, Missouri, May 30. My healthy optimism meshed with the electricity of the moment, one which would realize the ideals I had spouted for the past year.

EMILY PLATT Co-Editor- in-Chief

I spent the months before the convention convincing my friends to vote for Dr. Ron Paul, Republican presidential candidate from Texas, in the Republican presidential primary. I was exhausted. Dr. Paul lost the election, but as he said all along, his campaign was only the beginning. His rhetoric stirred the simmering discontent of our generation, awakening the latent libertarian roots on which our country rests.

My greatest influence that weekend wasn't in the defiant vote I cast against Senator John McCain at the Convention, but through a sparkly patriot seated behind me as I voted. I'll call her Mrs. McBush-lover.

My greatest influence wasn't
in the defiant vote I cast
against Senator John McCain,
but through a sparkly patriot
seated behind me as I voted.

An American flag must have thrown up on her. She boasted an Uncle Sam top hat, a Star-Span-gled-Banner jumpsuit, and "W" earrings. I love America as much as the next kid, but one glance at her fueled all the sarcasm I could handle for the day.

I didn't expect to have much in common with her. But as people always do, she surprised me.

"You want a tic-tac, honey?" Mrs. McBush-lover said from the row behind me. She caught me by surprise. Her friends had been complaining the entire convention about those "crazy Ron Paul people" (me and my friends) and their uncanny ability to prevent a lunch break. Democracy tends to interfere with lunch plans.

"Who is Ron Paul, anyway?" she asked. Those who know me know I never leave that question

alone, but I hesitated. Could she be another waste of an hour, a waste of my energy? I couldn't tell.

I spent the next 45 minutes asking questions to which she had never thought of the answer. Why do we need the Federal Reserve? Why do we have a progressive income tax? What does it mean to be "Pro-Life" if we've had 8 years of George Bush and a Republican Congress, yet abortion-on-demand remains? What should the role of government be, anyway?

Vehement replies couldn't mask her inconsis-

You don't have to be an
economist or a theologian for
these ideas to make sense.

tency. As we chatted, I watched her paradigm shift. That day birthed an individual who considered the alternative to our intoxicated two-party system.

I hope to never see another opportunity as a waste. The ones who hold the true power for change are none other than ourselves, with our furious pens and lofty ideals. It is our responsibility to change people's minds about the role of government, the preeminence of liberty, and the import of the constitution.

Our staff arrived at this school of thought by different paths; mine was theological, and I won't apologize for it. Others came through philosophy, economics, or history. But in the diversity of the movement lies its peculiar weight; you don't have to read the theologian Thomas Aquinas or the economist Ludwig von Mises for these ideas to make sense.

Our newspaper's name reflects our mission. Right now, the political climate on campus is anemic at best. We have lack of thoughtful debate, coupled by the stereotypical apathy of our generation, topped with the dusty partisan dogma of the Baby-boomers.

We want you to love us. Or hate us. Whatever you do, forget what you think you know and consider the alternative. Personal attacks are welcome. They mean we're making you think.

We can demand a better society through action. Our ideas can change individuals, our campus, the world. We started this paper for the chance to be instigators of the more cogent alternative. We intend to *Ignite* the flame of liberty on the campus of Lindenwood University.

Back to the roots

Hot-button issues pale in light of fundamentals

As the presidential election gets closer, I grow increasingly dissatisfied with the two major candidates. Democrats see Obama as too lib-

JAMES KINTZ
Co-Editor-in-Chief

eral, while Republicans are disappointed with McCain for not being conservative enough. It seems voting third party is a waste, and I know that many Americans feel the same way.

Although there are third party options, it's pretty clear that they stand about as good of a chance at getting into the Oval Office as Congress has of being fiscally responsible. However, when we take a closer look at the divisions among the political parties, we start to see that we have more in common than not.

There are several issues that cause these divisions. Abortion, homosexual marriage, massive economic bailouts, social security and other government-sponsored programs cause fierce debate among Americans. But I'm afraid that this is a classic example of putting the cart before the horse. Although these issues are important, there are others that we should understand before we can discuss these problems. Once we

do, we may find that these other issues will take care of themselves.

Instead of debating controversial topics, we need to be discussing what the role of government is in the first place. What is the purpose of government? How big should government be? How much power should we give the government? These are the issues that we must deal with before we can come to any agreement on the issues that plague this nation today.

Once we know what the role of government is, we can know if they have the right to ban abortion. Once we understand the proper size of government, we can determine which welfare programs are appropriate, if any. Discussion of these issues will lead to different conclu-

Instead of debating narrow issues, we need to discuss what the role of government is in the first place.

sions, but this is the sort of dialogue we need. It might even allow us to talk about politics in a healthy way, which may lead to the reform that this nation needs.

One very important fact that we seem to be forgetting is that we elect representatives,

not rulers. We must work to ensure that they genuinely represent us without infringing on our rights, while still allowing them to perform the necessary functions of government.

Until we talk about these important issues, we will continue to be dissatisfied with our candidates. Without a proper understanding of government, we cannot claim to have strong opinions on what the government should and shouldn't do. This is exactly why we at *Ignite* wanted to start this paper. We want to help people think along lines that will preserve our Liberty for generations to come. We believe

We are at a crossroad. If we drop the ball, freedom could be lost for a long time.

that the founders of this nation operated on undeniable principles. Until we understand these principles, we will continue to lose sight of the foundation of our freedom.

We are at a crossroads. If we drop the ball, freedom could be lost for a very long time. Now is the time to ensure that we are genuinely represented. Now is the time to stand up and reclaim the principles that have been lost. Now is the time to re-*Ignite* the flame of Liberty and revive the freedoms that we hold dear. If we fail to do our part, then freedom itself will be at stake.

[THIS IS YOUR SPACE]

LOVE US? HATE US? WRITE US.
WRITE A LETTER TO THE EDITOR. STUDENTSFORLIBERTY@YAHOOGROUPS.COM

Keep the Change: *When it comes to the Federal Budget, Barack Obama is more of the same*

Media anchors have accused Senator John McCain of running a dishonest campaign, full of baseless attacks. They portray him as a man who has lost his integrity. Anchors like CNN's Jack Cafferty are going after potential McCain supporters, accusing them of voting on race only. These same people are giving Senator Barack Obama a free ride on several issues. Most anchors, including MSNBC's Keith Olbermann

**A.J.
MEDLOCK**
**Staff
Writer**

and Chris Matthews, seem to view him as a near-messianic figure, appointed by history to save our nation in its hour of need.

"He is like a gift from the world to us in so many ways," Chris Matthews said. In the media's unfortunate bias concerning Mr. Obama, they are ignoring his numerous faults, the most important being fiscal policy. The way government spends our money, not race, is an issue which concerns many voters, contrary to what Mr. Cafferty wants viewers to believe.

Fiscal policy is Mr. Obama's most glaring fault, over which he shows no concern. The federal debt currently hovers around 9 trillion dollars. According

to Scott Bittle and Jean Johnson, co-authors of *Where does the Money Go?*, there is a growing fear that foreign governments who loan us money could lose faith in the U.S.' ability to repay colossal loans.

As these loans grow and generate interest, the dollar loses its value and the national debt increases.

Fiscal Policy: How the government spends our money

Interest rates rise, meaning businesses cannot take out loans to further growth and individuals cannot afford loan payments. Employers will stop hiring, downsize, and the unemployment rate will rise, causing economic recession or worse.

The Congressional Budget office stated in September that the overwhelming majority of tax revenue, \$1,268,000,000,000, is allocated to four programs which most politicians of both parties consider untouchable: Defense, Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security. With the Baby Boomers hitting retirement age, there will be more elderly people claiming Social

Security and Medicare/Medicaid assistance. This nation needs a President who can and will demonstrate serious fiscal restraint in budget matters.

Mr. Obama does not have any serious proposal to solve this pressing national emergency. The only solution on Mr. Obama's campaign website is to reinstate Congressional "pay as you go" rules, which would make Congress have to raise taxes, or as he calls it, "new revenue," when it wants to spend more. The reinstatement of these "pay go" rules will do nothing to address the national debt. Even cutting so-called pork barrel spending would barely make a dent in the budget deficit.

To make matters worse, Mr. Obama has no record of being responsible with taxpayers' money. The National Taxpayers Union examined Mr. Obama's voting history on budget issues and gave him an "F." From 2006 through 2008, he has requested \$860,600,000 for 326 projects. In Mr. Obama's proposed spending plan, he would further increase the budget by nearly \$292,954,000,000. This number is likely to be even higher as many of his proposed plans lack a specified cost.

Mr. Obama would do nothing for our current budget problems; worse, instead of decreasing the size of government, he wants to massively increase it even further. Keep the change, Barack Obama. We can really do without it.

A Better Candidate:

**DREW
CARRIER**
**Staff
Writer**

*Top 15
reasons
why
Pirate
Baby
deserves
your vote*

- He is only pretending to be a pirate. He doesn't really want to steal your money
- He may speak gibberish, but at least he doesn't pretend to make sense
- He will need less nap time than McCain and he is cuter than Obama
- Breast feeding costs less than universal health care
- Just like Obama, he is used to being praised for everything he does
- He won't be sleeping with any interns because his crib only has room for one
- There is already plenty of formula left over from George W.
- His diapers will be easier to change than McCain's
- He is willing to accept payment in bubbles instead of cash
- His cabinet members will include Smokey the Bear and Sponge Bob
- He is the least likely to die during his term
- Who would assassinate a baby?
- He wants to end the war by collecting dirty diapers to bomb our enemies... how could that not work?
- He is a master at hiding his true emotions behind his binky
- He will end the war on terrorism and start a full force attack on meany heads

MICHAEL FLIERL
Staff Writer

Let's be honest, none of your daily expenses compare to the amount you (or your parents) pay for school.

The average undergraduate debt after graduation is over \$19,000, according to Senator Barack Obama's website. And, if you haven't noticed, a B.A. isn't worth the paper on which it's printed anymore.

The President could impact your economic and professional life tremendously. So let's explore the higher education positions of the three leading presidential candidates by six categories.

So what's the bottom line? Let's summarize each position and then weigh the outcome.

Mr. McCain wants more efficiency, plain and simple. In lessening the complications of paperwork and in shifting loans more to the private sector, Mr. McCain claims that he can save the government, and you, money.

Mr. Obama wants to simplify as well, but asserts that further government involvement in the process will make it more efficient. Furthermore, Mr. Obama wants more community involvement by college students, and more opportunities for the lower class to have higher education available.

Representative Bob Barr wants to eliminate

The Issues:	John McCain Republican	Barack Obama Democrat	Bob Barr Libertarian
Tax Benefits	Simplify the tax code so that more eligible families can claim them	Double tax credits in return for 100 "community service" hours	Tax credits for state level private school students
Federal Financial Aid	Same as above	Boost Pell Grant and eliminate FAFSA	Eliminate federally-funded grants
Student Lending Programs	Shift more loans to private sector	Eliminate FFEL program and provide loans exclusively through the Direct Loan Program	Eliminate federally-funded lending programs
Federally Funded Research	Eliminate "ear-marks"	N/A	N/A
Information & Community	Make more info available to citizens about educational institutions	Federal tax credits; 18% increase in community work-study programs	Parents to take more of a role in education. Schools should be managed locally
Junior College	N/A	Help junior colleges identify high-demand skills; give federal aid	N/A

Information according to the respective candidates' official campaign websites

Your Money: What the presidential election means for higher education

the Department of Education and place the responsibility of education on parents or the states. However, it is not entirely clear if Mr. Barr is referring to K-12 or all of education. The only position he directly holds that is related to higher education is the elimination of federal funding to schools.

The greatest downfall to two of the three programs is that they do not address the issue of the impotency of a four-year degree. With more people attending college than ever, the market has become inundated with expensive

degrees that do next to nothing for the people who paid for them. Until this problem has become addressed and resolved, attempting to make more money available to higher education students is akin to using a band-aid for a broken nose. Making college cheaper will not make your degree more valuable in today's job market. Obama is the only one to weigh this by advocating more vocational training and studies to determine emerging career demands.

But what's the big deal, though? It's only your career and your money.

Ron Paul's recent run for President caused quite a stir. Ron Paul never believed that he would become President, but he did think that he could use his run to disseminate libertarian ideas. Unlike all other Republicans, he argues that the Iraq war was unjust and unnecessary from the start. Instead, America needs to pull out of all 130 military bases we have all over the world, because we're coming off like an occupying imperial power. Domestically, Paul argues that

RACHEL DOUCHANT
Assistant
Professor of
Philosophy

the Federal Reserve's practice of inflating the money supply is nothing but an unapproved tax that can only create short-term benefits at the expense of long-term economic confusion.

Sometimes Paul sounds like a hard-core liberal and sometimes like a free-market conservative. In one of the presidential debates, the moderator was so incredulous over Paul's positions, he finally demanded to know what Paul was even doing on the stage with the rest of the Republican presidential candidates. The explanation is that Paul's political philosophy is libertarian.

"Libertarian" is the modern term for 'classical liberal,' the political philosophy that proposes a minimal government that defends civil liberties and free markets. By and large, this was the political philosophy of America's founders. Today, libertarians oppose the Iraq war, the Patriot Act, the prohibition of drugs, and the federal marriage amendment,

which are views typically associated with modern liberals. On the other hand, they oppose regulation of markets, most environmental legislation, and want free trade with all, views typically associated with conservatives.

One approach to libertarianism involves the attribution of natural rights to human persons. If all humans own their own bodies, then they own the property that they create, as well as the property

What the heck is a Libertarian?

...from the faculty

they acquire through voluntary exchange. Violations of another's bodily integrity, personal property, or breaches of contract, are illicit. As the old saying goes, "My right to swing my arm stops where your nose begins."

Utilitarians (a type of libertarian) argue that a free market and respect for civil liberties lead to the greatest happiness for the greatest number. They think this because each person could pursue their own ends and, since free markets tend to make people richer, they would have an increasing capacity to do so.

Some libertarians reject both of these options, arguing that the existence of natural rights is hard to justify and that utilitarianism as an ethical system is

incoherent. However, libertarian policies are desirable on a number of other reasonable grounds. For instance, some argue that people tend to become virtuous and happy due to the smaller communities to which they belong (family, voluntary organizations, work), not larger ones such as the state or nation. Others emphasize that, within the proper infrastructure of property law, a market economy is a spontaneously-ordered network of exchanges that tends to move labor and resources toward their most efficient uses. But if the government tampers with it, there will be serious negative unintended consequences.

In the end, everyone who has access to the system starts using it to fleece everybody else.

Finally, people tend to use power for their own benefit rather than for the public good. We shouldn't give people a lot of political power. In the end, everyone who has access to the system starts using it to fleece everybody else.

While many of these arguments are compatible with one another, the different philosophical approaches do lead to different policy recommendations on some issues, such as immigration or abortion.

Whatever their position, though, libertarians all see the value of a system of private property rights.

A lot of us grow up thinking there are only two sides to every political argument - that either the Republicans or the Democrats are right. The reality is that no party has a monopoly on the truth or the best way of doing things. Corruption, ignorance, and focuses on short-term political gains have caused each of the current major parties to stray significantly from what the founding fathers envisioned and from what is best or safest for the American people.

JOSH HEDLUND
Staff
Writer

The purpose of this paper is to ignite political thought and conversation that is not tied to any party, but grounded in reasoned political and economic arguments to determine what truly are the most efficient and just positions and policies. But for many of us contributors, this desire did not come out of nowhere. For many of us, it was birthed in the presidential campaign of Congressman Ron Paul.

Mr. Paul ran for the Republican party nomination for President in 2008, energizing citizens across the



Who is Ron Paul?

How one obstetrician-turned-politician sparked a movement

country with his unique record and positions while picking up a few delegates and over a million votes.

Some of us liked his economic views. Mr. Paul believes the Constitution does not allow a lot of the money being spent by the government today. For years, Mr. Paul has been speaking out against our government spending more money than it takes in, forcing us to borrow from other nations. For the first time, many of us learned how various policies didn't make sense and often made things worse for the very people they were supposed to be helping. We came to appreciate the common-sense behind a lot of libertarian economic thought.

Some of us liked his opposition to the Iraq War. He was one of the few Republicans who opposed

the Iraq War from the beginning, and not for politically popular reasons. Mr. Paul objected to giving the President the authority instead of declaring a war from Congress as the Constitution requires.

Some of us looked into his foreign policy views and liked his call to bring home American troops from bases in over a hundred countries. Some of us liked the integrity of his record. In over two decades of service in Congress, Mr. Paul never voted for a tax increase or to raise his own pay. He never took free trips with taxpayer money, and he never voted to spend taxpayer money on something he didn't believe was allowed by the Constitution and the rights it gave to Americans. Many of us liked the fact that someone in the government claimed to hold principles and backed it up with his record.

Most of us don't agree with Mr. Paul on every issue, but he introduced us to a way of thinking that goes beyond the rhetoric of the two major parties. We hope to explore that thinking through this paper, and we hope you'll join us.

Now that's exposure

It is hard to have a good college experience without a strong college community, and campus community is only as good as you make it. Making a strong community on campus is as simple as being open to meeting new people and hearing new ideas, and is that not what college is about - exposure?

DREW CARRIER
Staff
Writer

The quad is a perfect example of community on campus. It is not uncommon to see a dozen people there at any time of day. Starting early in the morning, the quad fills

with students getting help on school work, playing frisbee, sharing stories, lending a hand, celebrating their victories, talking out their troubles, or just killing time between classes. Each individual brings something unique to be shared with the community.

As the day turns to night and classes come to an end, life in the quad continues. You will find various musicians such as Dave Cattani and Eddie Naeger playing music on the bench, occasionally inspiring a sing-along.

To Naeger, it is a social experience. "It's a friendly atmosphere and it always has been," he says. "It's not about bringing your attitude, it's about talking to friends about your problems and your glory days."

Cattani explained the benefits the broad perspective our campus provides. "The people here have taught me to appreciate music that I otherwise would not have appreciated, and to find a happy medium between the musical preferences of others and my own playing style." To Alan Evans, being active on campus helps him forget the stress of class and to keep informed about what is going on in the news.

A strong community is crucial for growth of the individual, as well as society. Students often complain about campus life at Lindenwood, but if they don't try to change the campus life, then they are not going to see any improvements. Being active benefits everyone differently. For Cattani, it is about learning new styles. For Evans, it's about broadening his perspective. For Naeger, it's about hanging out with old friends and making some new ones.

Students should strive to make an impact on their community, meet new people, hear stories, tell some stories or talk some politics. Take advantage of the endless opportunities to expose yourself to something new. There are countless ways to be proactive on campus. Each day, students should take the opportunity to meet one new person and try to learn something about them, to be exposed to the campus and those who share it, and to make their presence known.

The time has come for the student voice to be heard above all others at Lindenwood. Past generations of students have followed regulations that are outdated. It is our duty to speak up and create progressive change on this campus.

It is obvious students here are unhappy with the way things are.

There would not be a need for this publication otherwise. I have asked countless students what they would like to see change

about this school. The majority simply said, "Everything." If that is the case, it is time to make that happen. No more wishing for things to be different.

JOSH PAINE
Staff
Writer

First, we can work together for better treatment with our finances. Collect on promises when it comes to funds. Tuition keeps rising,

against what we have been told, yet the low quality of student life stays the same.

Next, the administration needs to weed out professors who actually care about teaching from those that just want a paycheck. Although it's nice to have a day where one does not have to go to class, when a professor releases class early

several times in a semester, or just fails to show up, they need to be re-evaluated. As students, we pay to learn from their knowledge. They should teach us, not read out of a book to us.

We can light a fire under this school to get them to provide for us.

In order to better this school, students and their mindsets also need to change. Apathy towards the school, its staff, and its student life is unacceptable. Students need to stop standing on the sidelines, watching our school grow without us, and take control over the institution into

which we put so much time and money.

How can we do it? Question authority. Make certain their rules are in the right for all persons. Argue for all liberties that are inherently human. Question the conduct of other students. Make one another strive to stand out from a crowd that does not care who runs things, who draws the short stick, or who gets lost in the bureaucracy.



Shake it up!

Students should take responsibility for their school, community, lives

Most importantly, be involved in campus groups that are proactive and strive to develop this

place into a great school. This is how we will create the kind of change we need to revive our campus.

College is a time of immense personal development. We should be granted an environment that will help us achieve our goals freely, not an environment that leaves us with few choices. We reserve the right to mold our school into the environment we crave.

Lindenwood is expanding very quickly, and if we do not act now, we will miss our chance to make this university what we want and need.

If the school continues to grow with minimal student involvement, future students may be subject to the same let-downs we are experiencing now.

There are so many minds on campus. There are so many opportunities to liven

I asked several students what they would like to see change about this school. The majority simply said, "Everything."

up this community of young scholars, if we work together, cooperate with one another, and make it so.

Lindenwood is a blank canvas. We the students are both the paint and the artist. Let us paint a picture that will stand to reform and represent this school in the way that we want.

One person may not be able to *Ignite* the flame of a student body to be proactive, intelligent, cooperative, and fun. But a group of people can. Join us. Help shake up the status quo.

Misguided: How government-funded flood relief hurts more than it helps

Fall has arrived and once again, Missouri's river valleys are flooding. The St. Louis metro area shared the effects of Hurricane Ike with as much as 6 inches of rain on Sunday, Sept 14. Unlike this summer's floods, small creeks and tributaries inflicted the majority of the damage. However, Ike wasn't the sole cause of flood damage. Government aid to flood victims was to blame for a portion of the damage in both floods.

MATT SIMPSON

Staff Writer

When flood damage occurs, state and federal governments typically subsidize reconstruction through government grants and loans offered at discounted rates, which sets the stage for worse devastation later on. Some government aid to flooded areas is necessary. Sending in the National Guard to help people evacuate, for example, fulfills an essential role of the government: protecting the public from real, physical harm. Subsidizing the cleanup and reconstruction, on the other hand, has negative, long-term consequences.

The intention to help people is never misguided. However, the means used to help people may be ill-advised. So, it's worth asking: Will this sort of flood relief actually relieve the pain that floods cause? In the short term, the answer is simple and obvious: yes. We can all see a farmer rebuilding his barn. Even

more concretely, we've seen Chesterfield sprout back up after the 1993 disaster. This isn't the entire story, though. What isn't as obvious is that subsidizing reconstruction actually causes more flood damage over time, undermining the intended goal of relief.

It's not difficult to figure out that lowland areas near rivers have a tendency to flood — or that this can be very costly for home and business owners. To varying degrees, people account for this risk when deciding where to move or set up a new business. But by providing aid to rebuild flood-prone areas, federal and state governments reduce the potential costs of a flood, and thereby the risk associated with living or doing business there. This essentially becomes a subsidy for areas that are likely to flood.

Any economics student knows what will happen next. Somewhere in the state, there are people who enjoy the benefits of living next to a large river like the Mississippi — the boating and fishing opportunities, for instance. But, all things considered, many of

The intention to help people is never misguided.

these people would ordinarily consider it just a bit too risky to live in such an area. Economists characterize these people as being "on the margin." When the costs associated with flooding are mitigated by the expectation of disaster assistance, some of the

people on the safe side of the margin cross to the risky side — they now see living by the river as an attractive option. Flood relief spurs some marginal home buyers to move into flood-prone areas.

This happens not only with potential residents,

Flood relief spurs some marginal home buyers to move into flood-prone areas.

but potential business owners, as well. The decreased risk brought by relief efforts means that businesses on the margin build new facilities in the flood plain rather than somewhere else, while businesses already in the area purchase new equipment and improve their buildings rather than limit possible losses.

As a result, these areas contain not only more potential victims, but also a much greater potential for damage. So, while government assistance for flood reconstruction can certainly help people who have been hurt by flooding, it also encourages some people to set themselves up for disaster. When the next flood comes, the damage will likely be much worse than if there had been no flood relief at all, in terms of both dollars and human suffering.

We can't ignore the effects of government intervention. A large portion of the blame has to be at the feet of the bureaucrats who rescue those who choose to live in flood prone areas. This policy encourages movement to dangerous areas to begin with.

Matt Simpson originally wrote this piece as an Intern for the Show-Me Institute

JOSH HEDLUND

Staff Writer

Last month, Hurricane Ike tore through the Gulf of Mexico, and over 90% of the Texas gulf area refineries shut down. Gas prices immediately jumped across the nation. Stations in St. Charles County leapt 20 or 30 cents in less than 24 hours. Was this price-gouging?

Not exactly.

People in America use a lot of gas, and normally refineries can produce enough gas to satisfy everyone. Gas stations rarely run out, and anyone who needs gas has the ability to get some. But when several refineries shut down for a week, there is suddenly much less gas to go around, even though the same number of people are driving cars and needing gas.

If there's not enough gas for everyone who wants

The "Ike Spike":

The myth of price-gouging and why gas prices really jumped

or needs it, some lucky people will get gas and some unlucky people will not get gas, until the refineries start back up and produce enough gas to go around. But something interesting happens when prices rise. Some people who would have filled up under the old price will only get enough gallons to last a few days under the new price. Some people who were planning

to go to the zoo or Six Flags will decide to wait a few weeks. This lets the shortened supply of gas last for more people, and ensures that someone who really needs gas can get it.

There are also reasons that gas prices rise more in certain areas. All the gas stations that usually get their gas from the refineries that were shut down, have to get their gas from other refineries. It costs more to transport the gas longer distances. If prices aren't raised, they wouldn't be able to afford to transport the gas the extra miles, and stations would not be able to get more supplies of gas.

President Bush promised that he would be on the look-out for "price-gouging," but he's unlikely to find any. The reason prices temporarily rise is to ensure that as many people as possible who need gas will be able to get it. There's no point in forcing prices down for something if you can't get it anywhere.