

## **EDITORIAL STARTERS**

Letters to the editors a great way to get your message out to try to influence people beyond your friends and family.

- Your opening sentence should let readers know why you are writing, so share your key point in the beginning.
- Instead of responding to an entire list in your letter, choose just a few points and focus on those topics to craft your best response.
- Remember that the public does not have your background or interest on the topic, so make sure you are clear in explaining your point.
- Keep it brief. Shorter letters have a better chance of being published. Reread your letter and try to condense thoughts and reduce redundancy.

Below you will find starters to help you write a direct and factual editorial. These can be used individually or combined to write an entire finished piece.

## **LOCAL TO NEBRASKA MESSAGING**

Nebraska's 25 ethanol plants are a major contributor to the state's economy, supporting communities with jobs and taxes, buying corn produced by our farmers and selling high quality feed to our cattle industry. Nebraska's ethanol industry generates a \$5 billion economic impact in the state.

Nebraska has a unique advantage known as the "Golden Triangle." The combination of corn, livestock and biofuel production provides significant opportunity to add value at every step along the production chain – and that creates jobs, revenue and economic vitality from border to border throughout the state.

Biofuels not only help build demand for Nebraska's crop farmers, but they also help build our state's economy and create local jobs. Through homegrown fuels, we are working to secure energy independence with locally-produced, clean-burning products.

Ethanol has been widely used in fuel more than 30 years, and is in 97 percent of U.S. motor fuel. Auto manufacturers need higher-octane fuel options to get superior fuel economy, reduced greenhouse gas emissions and lower prices for consumers. Ethanol is high-octane, low-carbon and the safest component in gasoline today. Ethanol is the clear choice for a healthier environment.

The biofuels industry has been a huge economic driver for the entire state. In just 30 years, biofuel production has changed the landscape in Nebraska and is poised to help our state become a national leader in the production of bioenergy and livestock feed.

Nebraska is in the enviable position of being the westernmost major producer of biofuel. Nebraska is one of the nation's leading bioenergy exporters with 96 percent of our ethanol production leaving the state and is well positioned to serve the fuel demands of the U.S.

International demand for biofuel and its co-products also bodes well for Nebraska's economic future. There is a strong demand throughout the world for ethanol and its co-products, so we continue to look for ways to expand the Nebraska market as well as international markets in an effort to bring more economic prosperity to Nebraska.

The state sees what economists describe as an economic 'bounce' when we take advantage of the added value when grain is converted to food, fuel, fiber and bio-products. There is enormous potential for biofuels to continue to strengthen the economic health of Nebraska.

## **E15 CONSUMER MESSAGING**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency approved E15 for use in all vehicles 2001 and newer, which is roughly 90 percent of all vehicles on the road today. Automakers continue to approve E15, with 90 percent of new 2018 model year vehicles explicitly approved by the manufacturer to use E15.

With E15, you'll save money at the pump, enjoy a bit of an octane boost -- and you'll help make our air cleaner since the higher amount of American Ethanol in the fuel further reduces toxic emissions from the tail pipe. E15 is the higher American Ethanol blend almost everyone can use.

A gallon of ethanol does have less energy than a gallon of gasoline, but the higher octane rating of ethanol means it burns more efficiently. By using cleaner-burning, high-octane ethanol fuels in high-compression engines, automakers can continue to achieve higher efficiency and increased fuel economy, while reducing carbon emissions.

Many factors effect mileage – speed, tire pressure, type of vehicle, driving habits, etc. The best thing is to try E15 or another ethanol blend and create your own evaluation of fuel economy and fuel costs – while factoring in the environmental and state economic benefits of using a homegrown product.

### **CLEAN AIR MESSAGING**

According to a recent USDA study (2017), renewable ethanol is cleaner than ever – greenhouse gas emissions associated with ethanol are 43 percent lower than gasoline.

Motorists have a choice of biofuels that significantly reduce pollutants. Ethanol-blended fuels, especially higher blends like E15, E30 and E85, significantly reduce toxic emissions from gasoline. These biofuel choices give consumers the option of paying less at the pump, while reducing pollution that takes a toll on our health and the environment.

According to the American Lung Association, up to 70 percent of ozone-forming pollutants come from transportation fuels. Gasoline contains as many as 300 different chemicals. Many of these carcinogens are used to increase octane—but some are known and suspected to cause cancer. Higher blends of biofuel dilute the level of toxic additives in our fuel, which helps reduce pollution and the threat to public health.

According to the EPA, mobile-source air toxics are compounds emitted from vehicles and are known or suspected to cause cancer and other serious health and environmental effects. Adding ethanol to unleaded gasoline is one of the best tools we have to fight air pollution from vehicles. The best part is ethanol helps reduce greenhouse gases and tailpipe emissions in the vehicles we already drive.

- Ethanol contains 35 percent oxygen, which results in more complete fuel combustion, reducing harmful tailpipe emissions.
- Ethanol displaces the use of toxic gasoline components such as benzene, toluene and xylene (BTX).
- Unlike crude oil, ethanol is rapidly biodegraded in surface water, groundwater and soil, and is the safest component in gasoline today.

## **BUY LOCAL MESSAGING**

Using higher blends of ethanol is a good decision for all Nebraskans. It helps the state's economy, consumers' wallets, vehicle engines and the environment. Ethanol's impact across the country and the globe continues to grow, but it starts right here at home.

When we choose renewable biofuels at the pump, we save money and support a homegrown fuel generating as much as \$5 billion for the state's economy. Nebraska-produced biofuels are cost-effective, American-made, renewable, and better for our environment.

Each time a Nebraska motorist pulls up to a pump, they make a choice. Choosing the ethanol option is easy and economical. Nebraska has no petroleum refining capability so every gallon of gasoline must be imported, which means money leaving our local economy. Motorists and policymakers can reduce this economic drain by displacing a portion of the imported gasoline with cleaner-burning biofuels made at Nebraska production facilities from corn grown in the state. Voting for biofuels at the pump is a logical and practical decision for motorists and policymakers alike.

We are making a difference right here in Nebraska by using higher blends of ethanol in the state fleet vehicles. The use of higher ethanol blends like E15 provides many states the opportunity to

use a value-added product produced locally in place of imported petroleum products. Reliance on domestically produced transportation fuels is a sound energy strategy.

## **SUSTAINABILITY & EFFICIENCY**

Through stewardship, new genetics and improved management practices, Nebraska farmers grow more with less – less fertilizer, less chemicals, less water, less land and less of an impact on the environment. American farmers grow five times more corn than they did in the 1930s – on 20 percent less land.

Farm conservation practices, like reduced tillage, cover crops and nitrogen management allow farmers to increase corn yields while reducing greenhouse gas emissions. According to a recent USDA study, homegrown ethanol is cleaner than ever – GHG emissions associated with ethanol are 43 percent lower than gasoline. USDA also found that even using conservative estimates, for every 1 BTU (energy measurement) used in making ethanol, 2.1 BTUs are produced.

Emerging technology in production and new feedstock sources continue to make the ethanol industry more efficient. Plants are producing more ethanol with less corn and water each year. Genetically-modified corn grown specifically for ethanol production also increases yields.

Burning corn ethanol in your car is carbon neutral. There is no net increase in atmospheric carbon dioxide from burning ethanol because the carbon dioxide produced simply replaces the carbon dioxide the corn plant takes from the air during photosynthesis.

Only the starch in corn is used for ethanol. Corn oil is used in food, livestock feed and biodiesel production, and the remaining distillers grains are a high-quality livestock feed. Technology and efficiency upgrades allow for more ethanol with fewer bushels of corn.

Ethanol and gasoline use similar amounts of water for production – about 3 gallons for every gallon produced. Ethanol, though, is non-carcinogenic and biodegrades rapidly. If there was an ethanol spill, the effects would be minimal compared to a petroleum spill.

## **GOVERNMENT SUBSIDIES**

Many people think that ethanol production is subsidized, which is misleading. During early development, Nebraska subsidized ethanol plant construction with an EPIC Fund (roughly 70% of the fund came from Agriculture taxes). The EPIC Fund ended in December 2011. There was also a 5¢/gallon state gasoline tax reduction for ethanol blends, which ended in December 2008. And a 4.5¢/gallon federal gasoline tax reduction for ethanol blends, which ended in December 2011.

Additionally, the increased use of ethanol helps reduce the need for agricultural subsidies — and America's energy dollars will go to domestic producers rather than to members of foreign oil cartels.