Memorial Day weekend is known as the unofficial start of summer and the beginning of the summer driving season. As the school year ends, families across America are packing up their cars to take their annual vacations. A large factor in deciding where to go is the cost of gasoline. And, thankfully, the efficiency of our nation's refiners, combined with the North American energy renaissance, have provided stable gasoline prices, far below what they were just five years ago.

Besides the gas used to fuel our cars, refiners also produce the asphalt that is used to pave our roads. In addition, hydrocarbons like oil and natural gas are the building blocks to make things that contribute to practically every aspect of summer vacations. From safety equipment, such as bicycle helmets and life vests, to inner tubes, boogie boards, umbrellas and kites used at the beach, to tents, sleeping bags and kayaks used while camping, petrochemicals are used to make nearly everything we use to enjoy a summer getaway. So many of the products made possible by hydrocarbons, especially petrochemicals, are taken for granted, including the band-aids used on a skinned knee, the plastics used in phones, tablets, and e-readers, or even the high-tech windmills and solar panels that can power those electronics. We rely on these products to make our lives better, safer, and more comfortable.

So, when you hit the road this summer, think of all the things brought to you by America's fuel and petrochemical manufacturers. As you start to give it some thought, you will see, from fuel to plastics, we are always a part of your summer plans.

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