



Traffic Weather: LOWELL, MA | Now: 39°F | High: 43°F | Low: 38°F | 5-Day Forecast

Mobile | Electronic Edition | Home Delivery | Lottery | Photos

Search bar with Search button

Site Web Search powered by YAHOO! SEARCH

Home News Business Obituaries Editorials Sports Entertainment Lifestyles Publications

Jobs Cars Homes Advertising

BOOKMARK Print Email Font Resize

A nation of handouts

The Lowell Sun Updated: 03/15/2010 08:43:41 AM EDT

On Jan. 22, the federal government set a new -- and some would say dubious -- milestone. For the first time since the founding of this great nation in 1776, the federal government added its 2,000th taxpayer-funded subsidy program.

There's a handout for almost everyone and every group in America -- and foreign nations too.

That's right. Not only are their entitlements, grants and loans available to Americans, but we provide U.S. subsidy programs to overseas interests too.

And the subsidy society just continues to expand. Because in the 52 days since the milestone was reached, President Barack Obama and the U.S. Congress have added another 23 new subsidy programs to the list, bringing the grand total to 2,023.

If only federal lawmakers could create new jobs at that pace.

Of course, not all federal subsidy programs are bad. Some help fund medical and technological research for agricultural, health and scientific endeavors. They also supply grants to small businesses looking to develop better products. Wheat subsidies go to farmers to feed the poor and starving in Africa.

But, by and large, there's a lot of special interest waste too, with billions of federal tax dollars going to obscure, arcane and indiffererent programs. The explosion of federal subsidies has mirrored the skyrocketing national debt, which now stands at \$12.7 trillion.

Why? That's a good question, but as federal spending has increased throughout the years, so has

Washington's intrusion into areas once considered the responsibility of state governments, businesses, charities and individuals.

There are federal subsidies for nearly everything you can think of. Just look up the U.S. Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (www.cfda.gov) and scroll through the 102 Internet pages of programs. (The list is so long with program eligibility details and minutia that Congress no longer permits a free, printed edition to be published because it is so costly.) You'll be amazed at what is being subsidized by taxpayers.

The biggest piece of the subsidy pie goes to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services with 382 programs, followed by the Department of Agriculture, 230; the Department of Interior, 203; Department of Education, 168, and Department of Justice, 126. At the other end of the spectrum, the Small Business Administration offers fewer than 40 federal subsidy programs.

It wasn't always this way.

Federal subsidy programs grew gradually and somewhat normally throughout the nation's history, not crossing the 1,000 barrier until the 1970s. By 1980 there were 1,123 programs. When President Ronald Reagan took office in 1981, he actually reversed the trend and lowered the number of subsidy programs to 1,013 by 1985. That figure held steady for the rest of the decade. But if the 1980s were the Age of Restraint, the succeeding two decades were characterized by an unparalleled explosion in the number and scope of subsidies put on the books.

Under Presidents Bush I, Clinton, Bush II, and Obama, more than 1,000 federal subsidy programs have been added -- a 99 percent increase in a little more than 20 years.

As Chris Edwards, director of tax policy of the Cato Institute, writes, "As the federal octopus extends its tentacles ever further, state governments are becoming no more than regional subdivisions of national government, businesses and nonprofits are becoming tools of the state, and individualism is giving way to a more European desire for cradle-to-grave-dependency."

In other words, America has become the Sweet Land of Subsidy.

BOOKMARK Print Email Font Resize Return to Top

Please note by clicking on "Post Comment" you acknowledge that you have read the Terms of Service and the comment you are posting is in

Business Name or Type Location Search

Learn how to effectively advertise your business online



Most Viewed Recent Comments Most Emailed

- 1. Rivers rise, roads close as rain falls
2. Man stabbed at Lowell bar
3. Court Briefs
4. Flooding closes Wilmington train station; officials closely monitoring rivers
5. So young. So suddenly, gone
6. Arrest Log: 3/14/2010

HEADLINES BY FEEDBURNER

Advertisement



Ask the Expert

Featured Expert: Louis Haskell Legal

More Advice and Experts:

Hobbies and Cra

Bankruptcy Law

More

MORE EDITORIALS

- A nation of handouts
Voters must force politicians to change
No more federal taxes
Education standards fall short
Nursing-home bed tax, wild turkey causes crash, pub noise
Back to school for Congress, Obama
Truce with SGI?
Fund life sciences
No problem with police overtime, Quinn Bill
Malkin: House Speaker Pelosi's deficient cleaning service

Top Classifieds

compliance with such terms. The host of this board reserves the right to remove posts with personal information or comments, personal attacks, foul language, and posts that are off-topic, spam or infringe on individual copyright. Repeated violation of these standards will result in banning from the board.

[Autos](#) | [Homes](#) | [Rentals](#) | [Jobs](#)

[JACK MANSUR'S USED CARS](#),
Click for Details

[ALL LISTINGS](#)

POST YOUR COMMENTS:

[Read all 9 comments »](#)

Type in your comments to post to the forum

Name
(appears
on your
post)

Comments

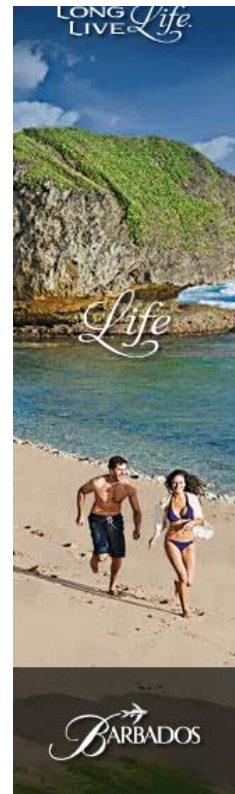
Type the numbers you see in the image on the

right:



Post Comment

Please note by clicking on "Post Comment" you acknowledge that you have read the [Terms of Service](#) and the comment you are posting is in compliance with such terms. **Be polite**, inappropriate posts may be removed by the moderator. [Send us your feedback](#).



[Debt Consolidation Services](#)

Consolidate Your Credit Card Debt.
Reduce High Interest
www.DebtReductionServices.org

[900% Gain on Penny Stocks](#)

Join today to receive our free newsletter, alerts,
www.StockPickTrading.com

[Refinance Now at 3.4% APR](#)

\$160,000 mortgage under \$712/mo.
Free. No Obligation.
MortgageRefinance.LendGo.com

Ads by Yahoo!

[Copyright Notice](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Information](#) | [Subscriber Services](#) | [Site Map](#) | [Advertise](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [RSS](#) [MY YAHOO!](#)

© Copyright 2010
Media News group

[MNGi Corporate Site Map](#) | [NIE](#) | [Weather Data](#) © Copyright 2007 CustomWeather, Inc | [MediaNews Group WEBSITE](#)