

Pittsburgh Region Clean Cities Gazette

Driving the way toward energy independence

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CNG training for Giant Eagle at National
Alternative Fuels Training Consortium



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CNG Limo/Trolley drives from Jeanette, PA to Springfield, MO

Larry Kovach of Vogue Limousines and K-Rental was having the interior of one of his two compressed natural gas trolleys refurbished in Springfield, Missouri, so Larry decided to drive it there. He had to chart his travels to ensure he was able to refuel along the way. It took some coordinating to make sure the stations that were identified on DOE's Alternative Fuel Data Center Station Locator were going to be open and were operating at the times Larry was going to be at their locations, but he was able to coordinate the trip.

Larry was amazed at how inexpensive the fuel was along the way. He stated he was able to get fuel every four to five hours at locations in Columbus, Oh (\$1.49 GGE), Indianapolis, ID (\$1.83) and St. Louis, MO (\$1.86). The trolley has a 50 gallon tank and it averaged 10-12 miles per gallon on the trip. It will take about nine weeks for the refurbishment to be completed, and Larry will make the trip back to Jeanette. Vogue Limousines and K-Rentals is also an authorized service representative for Azure Dynamics which produces hybrid electric and electric drive trains.

Obama's State of the Union Addresses One Million Electric Vehicle Challenge

On January 25th, 2011 President Obama gave his yearly State of the Union Address in Washington D.C. This year President Obama spoke about clean energy fuels, job creation in the energy sector and the need to break the United States dependency on foreign petroleum. Obama stated "With more research and incentives, we can break our dependence on oil with biofuels, and become the first country to have a million electric vehicles on the road by 2015." This may be a bold statement but with a strong backing and financial support from the United States Government this is far from impossible.

In May of 2009, Obama set the ground work for this challenge when he announced that by 2016 auto companies will have to meet a 35.5 mpg minimum fuel efficiency standard. This standard was pushed forward in June of 2009 when the Department of Energy awarded \$8 billion dollars in loans to Nissan, Ford and Tesla Motors to help create better fuel efficient vehicles. Years later we are introducing new fuel efficient vehicles run on electricity that can be charged at your home. With the introduction of the Nissan Leaf and Chevrolet Volt now on the market and soon to be Mitsubishi i MiEV coming in 2012, the vehicles for the One Million Vehicle Challenge will be present.

When hybrid vehicles were first introduced to the market, consumers were also skeptical. But, with the comfort level of consumers increasing with new technology, electric vehicles are becoming more and more intriguing. The technology is there; and with increasing tax credits, incentives, the lowering cost if mass produced and a steadily rising petroleum price at your local gas station; plug-in electric vehicles are looking to becoming very reasonable economically.

NAFTC Course Supports Giant Eagle's Transition to CNG Vehicles

Instruction from the National Alternative Fuels Training Consortium is helping Giant Eagle become a leader in energy efficient transportation.

From Jan. 11-13, representatives from Pittsburgh-based Giant Eagle participated in the NAFTC's Light-Duty Natural Gas Vehicles course, which trained several of the company's technicians to service and maintain compressed natural gas (CNG) vehicles.

Mike Lickert, corporate fleet manager for Giant Eagle's distribution unit Talon Logistics, Inc., explained that several years ago, he developed an interest in incorporating alternative fuel vehicles into the company's fleet. Thus, he attended the NAFTC's Overview of Biodiesel course in 2006. Following the biodiesel course, Lickert led an effort to implement various blends of biodiesel into the Giant Eagle fleet.

"The NAFTC course was a stepping stone to our usage of biodiesel," Lickert noted.

Broc Johnson, transportation supervisor at Talon Logistics, said the company currently has a terminal in Harmony, Pa. that supplies only B20, a blend of 80 percent diesel and 20 biodiesel.

"We're pretty excited about that," Johnson commented, referring to the Harmony terminal. "All of our facilities run on some blend of biodiesel, whether it's B20, B5 or B3. In addition, one of our yard trucks at the Pittsburgh terminal runs on recycled cooking oil from one of our stores. We see this as an opportunity to close the waste loop."



After several years of prominently using biodiesel, Giant Eagle received in 2010 an Alternative Fuel Incentive Grant from former Pennsylvania Gov. Edward G. Rendell. Combined with a \$2 million investment from Giant Eagle, the \$900,000 grant will allow for the purchase of 10 compressed natural gas-powered vehicles and the installation of a public CNG refueling station as well as a private one.

Johnson said Giant Eagle's Talon Logistics will receive their first 10 natural gas powered heavy duty trucks this spring. Johnson and Lickert took a proactive approach and had five of their technicians trained on CNG fueling systems and vehicles during the NAFTC's course, which was taught by NAFTC National Instructor Mark Schmidt.

"We saw this training at the NAFTC as a stepping stone," Johnson added. "It was a crucial learning point in the application of natural gas as an alternative fuel, and it was great getting to work with the technology up close. The course gave our team members a solid base layer of knowledge on the subject. They saw natural gas vehicles first hand and the outcome was increased confidence accompanied with a positive attitude."

Schmidt added that he enjoyed teaching the Giant Eagle employees and looks forward to the company's CNG expansion.

"I worked with them on cylinder inspection, ignition systems and fuel lines," Schmidt noted. "As their CNG fleet expands, they'll be sending other technicians here for training."

"Our company tries to be a good corporate citizen," Lickert said. "Switching to natural gas will boost our environmental stewardship. In the grand scheme of things, we want to be 100 percent natural gas at this facility."

Finally, Lickert pointed out that Giant Eagle is planning to install 10 electric vehicle charging stations, which will recharge their short-trip vehicles and also be available to the public.

"I am proud to be apart of the Giant Eagle team," Johnson said. "We are using multiple forms of alternative energy in order to reduce our carbon footprint. There is definitely piece of mind knowing that your company is focused on being socially responsible."



[photos and article courtesy of NAFTC]

Thomas Built CNG Bus Featured at EQT/Giant Eagle Event

On January 17, 2011 a Thomas Built Compressed Natural Gas School Bus was on display

Equipment (Canfield, OH) was on hand to answer specific questions on the Thomas Built Bus. The bus was one of eighty five buses that are being built and sent to a California school district. Greg said that an addition 30-40 buses had been ordered for the Kansas City, MO area. Many thanks go to EQT for arranging for the bus and to Giant Eagle for hosting the event.



play at the facilities at Giant Eagle in Crafton, PA. EQT and Giant Eagle hosted the event.

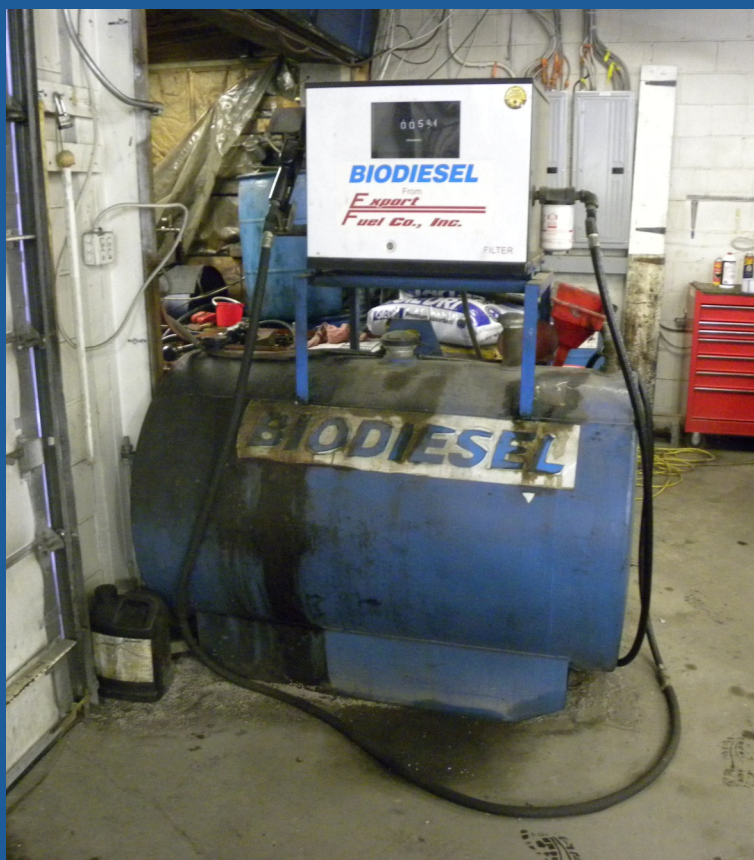
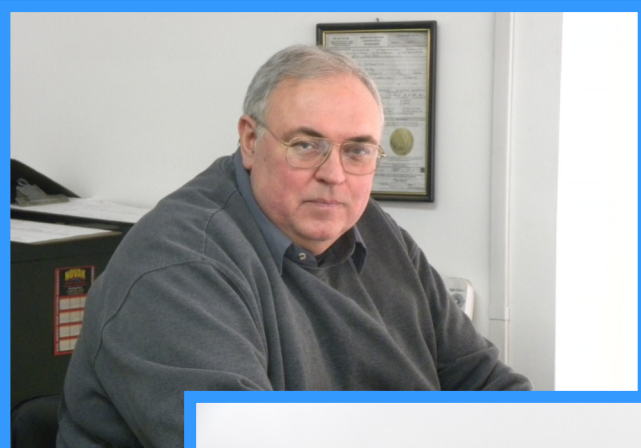
There were other CNG and hybrid vehicles at the event for attendees to explore and ask questions about. Greg Spencer of Myers



A compressed natural gas powered Honda Civic was also on display in the Giant Eagle garage at the event.



Member Highlight: Baum Boulevard Automotive



Chuck Wichrowski, owner of Baum Blvd Automotive, has been selling bio-diesel (B100) for many years. He purchases the bio-diesel from Export Fuels. Although Chuck sells only a limited amount of the fuel each year, he said it's very important to those folks who believe that using bio-diesel is reducing our dependency on foreign oil as well as cleaning the environment.

Chuck is also involved in a project with Carnegie Mellon University's Electric Car Garage. He is working with CMU to be one of the vendors who will be able to convert gasoline powered cars to all-electric vehicles, using the technology developed under the CMU program.

Chuck believes that no one technology will be the answer to replace petroleum-based fuels, so he has started a training program for his mechanics in order to be ready for the new technologies. He was instrumental in the Pittsburgh Region Clean Cities effort to engage the Community College of Allegheny College to join the National Alternative Fuels Training Consortium (NAFTC) to enable the community college to offer training in alternative fueled vehicles and technology.

Leaders like Chuck are needed to help drive the use of alternative fuels in Western Pennsylvania and beyond.

Photo Gallery



Pacific Pride fleet station in Greensburg— assessing possible future CNG station



People's Gas on-site CNG station in Greensburg

Pittsburgh Auto Show, Feb. 2011



Chevy Volt



Nissan Leaf



President's Corner by Jan Lauer

A few weeks ago President Obama put forward a challenge to have a million electric vehicles on American roads by 2015. Is that even possible? The Electrification Roadmap, a study published by the Electrification Coalition in 2009, said that 14 million electric vehicles could be on our roads by 2020. If the demand for the Leaf, the new all electric offering from Nissan is any indicator, those predictions may well be met. Nissan closed its first round of reservations for the Leaf at 20,000 vehicles, waiting to accept more reservations until the first round vehicles are delivered. The other automakers with electric vehicle offerings are experiencing the same interest from the public. Gas prices well on their way to the predicted \$5 per gallon are certainly helping to spur attention and interest. To help meet this goal, besides the tax credits on the purchase of electric vehicles, the President has also committed to federal investments in electric vehicle R&D, funding to support charging station deployment, and even funding to help retool factories.

PRCC is ready to do its share to help access these funds to deploy electric fleets and charging infrastructure in the region. To help build awareness, we are convening a series of workshops on electric vehicles and the new charging technologies for members and stakeholders. We also look forward to working with many of you to pursue state and federal grant opportunities to assist with the installation of charging stations and vehicle purchases. With your help and support, we can work toward becoming a showcase for electric vehicle technology and deployment.



Vogue Limousines' CNG Limo/Trolley



Upcoming Events

Board of Directors Meeting Schedule for 2011

April 6, 2011

July 6, 2011

October 5, 2011

Stakeholder Meetings

April 1, 2011, 10:00am - 1:00pm - Stakeholder meeting at Community College of Allegheny County, West Hills Center - Agenda includes PRCC Annual Plan, committee updates, upcoming funding, opportunities, and other important topics.

April 19, 2011, 10:00am - 1:00pm - Propane Event at Turnpike Southwest Office, New Stanton, PA - Propane vehicles on display, presentations and speakers on the use of propane as a transportation fuel.

Membership

Pittsburgh Region Clean Cities is always looking for new members! Our job is to help you understand the value and importance of converting to alternative fuels. We can tell you about the incentives available to you for using alternative fuels. We can help guide you through making smart financial and environmental choices about purchasing an alternative fueled vehicle or using an alternative fuel. Become a member, and we can help you assess your fleet and objectives, as well as work with you to acquire funding assistance. If you would like to join and/or volunteer, please contact Rick Price at coordinator@pgh-cleancities.org

Contribute Your News!

We want to showcase your news and successes, and we welcome ideas for articles. Please feel free to contact Rick Price, Executive Director/Coordinator, at 412-735-4114 or at coordinator@pgh-cleancities.org

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