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Biofuels industry seeks help to “turn the spigot”

Counties key for biodiesel to flow in Wisconsin

MADISON, WISCONSIN – October 2, 2007 - Calling upon local governments to “lead by example,” the Wisconsin Biodiesel Association has reached out to the counties in an effort to expand distribution of biodiesel in Wisconsin.

According to WBA President Jeff Pieterick, the most common question he receives from biodiesel enthusiasts is “Where can I find it?” Pieterick claims that fuel wholesalers are reluctant to include biodiesel in their portfolio as a product to offer to their retail accounts without assurance that a biodiesel market exists in the state. Meanwhile, he says, retailers remain unaware that biodiesel is an alternative to diesel that is often preferred by their customers.

“It’s a logjam wherein biodiesel remains unavailable because so few customers request it at the pump,” says Pieterick. “Yet, consumers are reluctant to seek out biodiesel because it is so generally unavailable. What’s needed is an effort to move off center and create a distribution network that will support and encourage the demand that exists.”

Pieterick feels that counties have a key role to play in breaking this logjam. He points out that county highway departments are major consumers of diesel fuel and, by definition, their fleets are distributed widely throughout the state. “If these fleets demand biodiesel from their local distributors, provisions will be made to include renewable biodiesel into distribution for all their local accounts. It will then begin showing up at more and more retail pumps, and retailers will be compelled to include biodiesel for sale to remain competitive in the face of unleashed market demand for the product. In this way, our county governments can help turn the spigot that will allow biodiesel to flow throughout the state distribution network.”

“Our members have already experienced good results with biodiesel,” says Mark O’Connell, Executive Director of the Wisconsin Counties Association. “Barron County has successfully experimented with B100 (100% biodiesel) in its fleet, Dane County uses B5 (5% biodiesel blended with petroleum diesel), and others have expressed interest in the renewable alternative to diesel fuel. Wisconsin county governments recognize biodiesel to be an excellent alternative to petroleum that supports environmental sustainability and contributes to our local economy. We look forward to working with the WBA to explore opportunity to help increase distribution of biodiesel and thus do our part to support our home grown biodiesel industry.”

The Wisconsin Counties Association Annual Conference convenes October 7 -9 in Wisconsin Dells. Members of WBA will be on hand at the convention to address questions from county representatives and to promote biodiesel usage in county fleets.

Biodiesel is an alternative to petroleum diesel that is made primarily from soy oil and other vegetable oils and animal fats. It is valued as an advanced biofuel for the efficiency of its production; for reduced air emissions; for its reduced carbon footprint, and for its contribution to both our domestic economy and this nation's pursuit of energy independence. More information on the North Prairie Productions biodiesel project in Evansville can be accessed via the web at www.npnrg.com.

The Wisconsin Biodiesel Association (WBA) is a membership trade organization that promotes the commercial development, production, marketing, distribution, and utilization of biodiesel and other renewable biofuels. You can learn more about WBA by visiting the web at www.wibiodiesel.org.

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