

*CASE STUDY:****Brooklyn Park Biodiesel Extends Equipment Life***

The City of Brooklyn Park didn't wait around for a biodiesel mandate. When members of the National Association of Fleet

Administrators started talking in 1998 about alternative fuels and alternative fuel vehicles, Steve Lawrence knew it was time to voluntarily conform to the EPAct (Energy Policy Act of 1992 which requires certain fleets to acquire alternative fuel vehicles), Jon Thiel, his director, agreed. They wanted to be proactive and felt that by acting now they could save money and a lot of headaches in the long run. In fall 2001 the City of Brooklyn Park initiated their biodiesel program.

After one winter of operation with absolutely no complications, they expanded their program and as of January 2005 there are 101 vehicle units running on B-5 – one of the largest such projects currently underway in Minnesota.

City administrators thought that their effort would show the community that it was spending money wisely and planning ahead while making their operations more environmentally friendly. Biodiesel is safe, biodegradable, and reduces serious air pollutants such as soot, particulates, carbon monoxides, hydrocarbons, and air toxins. Biodiesel acts like a detergent

additive, loosening and dissolving sediments. Biodiesel is also a superior lubricant.

While the fuel is a bit more expensive than standard diesel right now (about 5 cents higher), city staff feels it will reap the benefits of forethought in the

years to come. They feel the improvements in emissions, reduction in odor, and quieter operation of diesel powered vehicles and equipment will offset the cost difference in the fuel.

Brooklyn Park has been working with the University of Minnesota and Hennepin County to be “agents of change” in Minnesota furthering biodiesel development around the state. They have agreed to work with the University's Center for Diesel Research on testing fuel additives that should both reduce biodiesel emissions and enhance biodiesel's performance, making biodiesel an even better option in years to come.

“We have reduced the emissions in our fleet significantly,” Lawrence said. However, at this point the department has not invested the money it would take



to obtain an actual percentage of emission reduction.

The streets department has also extended the life span of their equipment by using biodiesel. In 1997, a Mack truck was expected to last 15 years. In 2005, the department is projecting that their 7 trucks will last 16 years. An International truck that was previously estimated to last 15 years are expected to last an extra year. Finally, the Chevy/K3500 4X4 Diesel truck is now

expected to last 10 years, up from 8 years in 1997.

“The Biodiesel has contributed to our ability to extend the life cycle of several expensive pieces of equipment,” Lawrence said.

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