

Clean Cities Vermont eNewsletter 11.10.2006

Your clearinghouse for news, programs, and funding related to reducing the consumption of petroleum for transportation in Vermont.

Clean Cities is a national program, coordinated by local coalitions in states and large cities, committed to advancing "the economic, environmental and energy security of the U.S." through cutting back on "**petroleum consumption in the transportation sector**". [More at the [Clean Cities](#) website].

Weekly Petro-Stats

	Gas at the pump, VT [compiled from gasbuddy.com]	Crude oil futures [compiled from nymex.com]
Last week (Oct 25-31)	\$2.206 /gallon	\$59.688 /barrel
This week (Nov 1-7)	\$2.181 /gallon	\$59.030 /barrel

NEWS & INFO BY SECTOR

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 - Vegetable oil
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 - Vermont's vehicle regs and diesel
- **Alternate modes of transportation**
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- **Fuels: DOE funding for alternative fuel projects announced**

On October 25, 2006 the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) announced \$8.6 million for 16 projects to increase the availability and use of alternative transportation fuels. The grants are part of the Clean Cities program and over \$25 million will be put directly into the U.S. alternative fuel infrastructure. Projects focus on new dispensing facilities and new equipment or enhancements to existing refueling sites for alternative fuel vehicles (AFV). Alternative fuel blending and refueling infrastructure is planned for over 180 locations in 25 states and the D.C. area. Of the awarded infrastructure improvements included the installation of biodiesel blending resources at existing gasoline facilities.

Unfortunately, none of the 16 planned projects were awarded to Vermont. Nevertheless, plans like the propane-powered vehicles project that is projected to reduce diesel fuel consumption by over 100,000 gallons per year will certainly have an effect on the Green Mountain State. Moreover, alternative fuel projects under these grants will be popping up as close as Chelsea, Massachusetts and Albany, New York. [Source: [U.S. Department of Energy](#)]

- **Fuels: Vegetable oil**

High School Students are trying to set a healthy example at Mount Mansfield Union High School. Eight students apart of the environmental committee at their school received a donated car 6 months ago from a local resident. Since then the students have been working to convert the Mercedes diesel engine to run on vegetable oil. The students are hoping to highlight our country's overdependence on petroleum and prove that their buses could easily run on some sort of alternative fuel, possibly biodiesel. Using recycled vegetable oil from a local bakery the students had the car up and running after only two tries. [Source: [WCAX](#)]

- **Fuels: Biodiesel**

The Vermont Biodiesel project has released a comprehensive report detailing their first phase efforts to build biodiesel demand in the state. Biodiesel consumption will hit one million gallons in Vermont by year's end. You can access the report at [vtbiodieselpoject.org](#).

- **Fuels: Vermont's vehicle regs and diesel**

In the last edition of the Clean Cities Vermont newsletter, we suggested that the new ultra-low sulfur diesel could potentially affect the ability of manufacturers to comply with the provisions of Vermont's Low Emission Vehicle (LEV) Program. This potentially muddled what are already confusing waters. There are common misconceptions about what Vermont's regulations are regarding diesel, which, if clarified, may assist interested Vermonters in framing the discussion on ways to reduce our petroleum consumption *and* global warming emissions.

Vermont's LEV regulations, which under the Clean Air Act Amendments must match California LEV regulations, do not in fact ban the sale of diesel or diesel vehicles per se, or any specific fuel for that matter. Instead the LEV Program requires vehicle manufacturers to certify that their vehicles meet low emission standards as defined by the regulation, while meeting a declining annual fleet average emissions standard for non-methane organic gases, and, starting in 2009, for greenhouse gases as well. There is a provision, however, for manufacturers to market otherwise non-compliant vehicles by negotiation with the California Air Resources Board (CARB) to offset the emissions from the dirtier vehicles through appropriate sales of certified, clean vehicles. In other words, the LEV Program requirement is certification by a manufacturer – nothing is banned. Manufacturers make business decisions about what level of emissions treatment technology to supply to particular models, and where to certify and market them.

Current light-duty diesel-powered passenger cars have not been certified by manufacturers to LEV standards or otherwise permitted through a manufacturer-initiated offset agreement, and therefore cannot be sold in Vermont, or in any of the 11 other states who have also exercised their Clean Air Act option to adopt California LEV standards.

The new ULS diesel fuel may or may not by itself permit a manufacturer to certify to a LEV program standard, but will enable the use of more sophisticated after-treatment technologies which are sensitive to the sulfur content of fuel. Volkswagen is an example of a manufacturer who has decided to withdraw light-duty passenger diesels from the entire U.S. market for the 2007 Model Year, in order to revise their primary engine fuel control from mechanical to a more sophisticated electronic injection system, a technology unrelated to ULSD. For the 2008 Model Year, VW, Mercedes and Honda are expected to certify 50-state or LEV compliant light-duty diesels, with the distinct possibility that several other manufacturers will do the same. ULSD fuel will not only encourage the necessary after-treatment of diesel exhaust, but also permit manufacturers to anticipate a reasonable full useful life of the treatment devices in a market driven by consumer expectations of dependability, enhanced by the consumer-friendly warranty provisions of the LEV Program.

Still have questions? [More info](#) on Vermont's vehicle emissions regulations, and how they are implemented through the state's Low Emission Vehicle program.

Our thanks to George Little for contributing to this item. You can [email George Little](#) about his work on the Vermont Low Emission Vehicle Program.

- **Alternate modes: Pedestrian progress**

That most fuel-efficient means of transportation – walking – has been getting more love lately, even in this rural state with two mud seasons. VTrans indicates that at least 14 towns made improvements to both pedestrian-friendly facilities this year. [Source: [Rutland Herald](#). [VTrans list of municipal projects](#)]

Pedestrian highlights from around the state:

- The town of Bennington has been awarded a matching grant of \$53,253 for improvements to sidewalks in its downtown. The

town has prioritized pedestrian safety and high traffic volume.
[Source: [Rutland Herald](#)]

- A health-conscious group walk series began a couple of weekends ago in East Montpelier, highlighting fun trails around town.
[Source: [Times Argus](#)]
- Hinesburg residents have prioritized pedestrian friendlier improvements for their town in addressing issues around traffic, transportation, parking, and pedestrian access. Proposed proactive changes included better sidewalks, reducing the speed limit, more sidewalks, public transportation options for commuting, access to businesses, and a town square. Implementation is still a question mark, however.
[Source: [Burlington Free Press](#)]

- **Policy Watch**

The 2006 mid-term election will impact funding and programs for Clean Cities-type activities in at least two ways. Democratic control of the House and Senate means Democratic chairs of House and Senate committees which direct funding and policy. For example, Barbara Boxer (D-CA) may take over the Senate Environment and Public Works, the committee from which Jim Jeffords was able to coordinate many positive environmental initiatives. Secondly, Vermont's delegation continues to be strongly supportive of sustainable and environmentally sound energy policy. New US Senator Bernie Sanders has supported funding for alternative fuel vehicles in Vermont including the hydrogen-fueling station and electric vehicles. Patrick Leahy has been a long-time supporter of organizations such as EVermont. And Peter Welch made climate change, reducing tax breaks for oil companies and directing funding to alternative sources of energy one of the key issues in his campaign. Stay tuned...

USEFUL CALENDARS

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[Vermont Peak Oil Network](#)

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Best regards,
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[Vermont Clean Cities Coalition](#)