

Alternative Fuel Station Opens in Fresno

By Robert Rodriguez, staff writer

The Fresno Bee, Tuesday, April 9, 2013

A Bay Area company has opened Fresno's newest gas station in hopes of attracting drivers of vehicles that use clean-burning fuel.

Propel Fuels of Redwood City launched its Clean Mobility Center on Tuesday at the southwest corner of Willow and Ashlan avenues. Along with conventional gasoline, the station offers E85 Flex Fuel and biodiesel from Community Fuels in Stockton and Calgren Renewable Fuels in Pixley.

The two fuels are championed for producing lower emissions and helping to curb the nation's dependency on fossil fuels. But finding stations that sell the cleaner-burning fuels has been difficult, said Matt Horton, chief executive of Propel Fuels.

"In California there are more than 1 million drivers with alternative fuel-ready vehicles," Horton said. "But the problem is that most don't have a place where they can fill up. And we are trying to be that connection."

Company officials say they may be the only providers of locally sourced E85 and biodiesel fuels in Fresno.

Flex fuel vehicles are designed to run on conventional gasoline or E85, a blend of 85% ethanol and 15% gasoline. Biodiesel, a product made from sources such as soybean oil, can be used in diesel engines.

"These are low-carbon, domestically produced fuel sources that will help break this country of its addiction to imported oil," Horton said.

Although Propel Fuels has nearly 40 locations in California and Washington state, nearly all the sites are a single pump at an existing branded station.

Fresno's Clean Mobility Center is only the second full-fledged station of its kind operated by Propel Fuels. The other station is in Fullerton.

At Fresno's Propel station, five of the pumping islands provide conventional gasoline, and one pump dispenses E85, priced at \$3.29 a gallon, and biodiesel at \$4.19 a gallon. Regular unleaded at the station was selling for \$3.85 a gallon. In the Fresno area, the average price of diesel on Tuesday was \$4.28.

To help spread the clean-fuel message, the station also has a sign reminding drivers how many pounds of carbon emissions have been reduced through the use of biodiesel or E85.

Horton said the company chose to open its second station in Fresno because the region produces alternative fuels, people are concerned about air quality and the city is business friendly.

"We also hear from customers that they like the fact that these are domestically produced fuels," Horton said.

Lyle Schlyer, president of Calgren Fuels, welcomed the new Fresno station. Calgren produces 60 million gallons of ethanol a year.

"Stations like this can really help increase the demand of alternative fuels," Schlyer said. "And that is good thing for everyone."

Gusts Topple Trees

Wind prompts air quality warning

Rose Albano-Risso, City Editor

The Manteca Bulletin, Tues., April 9, 2013

Gusty winds on Monday may have toppled decades-old stalwart trees, but not the spirit of 80 intrepid women golfers playing their annual tournament at the Manteca Golf Course.

Strong northerly winds of 20 to 30 mph, with gusts up to 40 miles per hour throughout the day transformed the skies around the South San Joaquin area into an eerie tule fog-like atmosphere. Along

West Yosemite Avenue from the Interstate 5 interchange to McKinley Avenue, big rigs and cars dodged wind-driven giant tumbleweeds that flew like feathers over the Union Pacific Railroad tracks, up above the high fences at the Delta A/C Supply company and onto the path of motorists at Yosemite before they continued their free-wheeling bumpy flight into the dry and dusty open fields and on to the dimly visible 120 Bypass.

The day's gusty winds prompted the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District to issue a health caution warning to residents in the Valley Air Basin through the evening. The district warned that blowing dust can result in unhealthy concentrations of particulate matter 10 microns and smaller which, in turn, can cause serious health problems, aggravate lung disease, trigger asthma attacks and bronchitis, and increase risk of respiratory infections.

The district also advised people suffering from heart or lung disease to follow their doctors' advice on how to deal with episodes of particulate exposure.

At Birchwood Street off of Northgate Drive in Manteca, a 40-foot eucalyptus tree in a front yard proved no match to the strong wind gusts that whipped the residential neighborhood around 11:30 a.m. The 35-year-old tree in the corner of the home's front lawn fell to the side of the street where the residents' 20-year-old son usually parks his car but not on this day. No injuries were reported. However, the tree's extensive root system took out a substantial size of the lawn's green grass.

Teresa Laney didn't hear the tree fall but was alerted by one of her neighbors living across the street that it had fallen and was completely blocking traffic on the roadway.

Laney said the tree was her husband's favorite because it provided almost total shade for his garage during the heat of the summer. She said she had called him at work and said he was devastated. Her son Frank was on his way home when the roots cracked clear of their front lawn and would have parked in his usual spot – under the shade of that tree.

City parks crews were on the scene within half an hour and manned their chain saws feeding tree limbs into a mulching auger that made fast work of the branches and trunk.

In Ripon, a mature walnut tree in another residential neighborhood fell to the ground roots and all during a strong wind gust in the morning.

Manteca Golf Course golf pro Paul Lamazor said the community links did not lose any tree to the strong winds on Monday but a few branches fell off some of the trees.

"It's pretty tough out here, unfortunately for them," he said of the 80 members of the Pacific Women's Golf Association who were holding their annual tournament Monday in Manteca.

The strong winds were making it tough for them to play, but it was "sweet victory for sure" to the winners, Lamazor said.

The women golfers, who come from different golf clubs all over the valley, the Bay Area, Fresno and Sacramento and always have their annual tournament in April, were no strangers to inclement weather accompanying their annual gathering in the Family City.

"Last year, it rained but they still played," said Lamazor.

Fresno gets first public biodiesel station

Written by Ben Keller

The Business Journal, Tuesday, April 9, 2013

Propel Fuels opened its first clean fuel station in Fresno today, offering drivers an alternative to the carbon-intensive gasoline most are used to.

Opening up at the corner of Willow and Ashlan avenues at the site of a former Shell Station, Propel's Clean Mobility Center is only the second by the Redwood City company in California, its first opening last May in Fullerton.

While five pumps at the station dispense gasoline, another offers E85 flex fuel (85 percent ethanol, 15 percent gasoline) and biodiesel derived from waste vegetable oil.

Both clean fuel types are sourced locally from Community Fuels in Stockton for the biodiesel and Calgren Renewable Fuels for the E85 blend.

Besides low-carbon fuels, visitors can also find bicycle tuning and repair stations, free water and air stations and a convenience store for drinks and food.

The station will be open 24 hours every day. During the first week, drivers who fill up with E85 or biodiesel will get \$10 back on their purchase.

Propel CEO Matt Horton was joined by several others at the station today to celebrate the grand opening, including Lyle Schyler of Calgren, Frank Ramirez with the Governor's Office of Business Development, Fresno City Council President Blong Xiong and representatives from Rep. Jim Costa and Sen. Dianne Feinstein's office and the Fresno Chamber of Commerce.

During his address, Horton also thanked Propel customers like the United States Postal Service and praised the willingness of so many in California to make low-carbon, domestic fuels their first choice at the pump.

"The state has a lot of great policies to encourage alternative fuel and there's a huge customer base," he said. "Fresno is at the intersection of how ag and energy can work together."

Following a ribbon cutting ceremony, attendants also got the chance to see the clean fuel pump at work as Horton filled a Ford flex fuel vehicle with E85.

Established in 2007, Propel Fuels now has 37 filling sites in California and Washington and California, but only two are full-size Clean Mobility Centers with gasoline, E85 and biodiesel.

The company's CleanDrive program allows members to track the reductions in CO2 offsets and barrels of oil displaced when they fill up at Propel locations.

State hindering better air quality?

Manteca finds mandates can be treacherous

Dennis Wyatt, Managing Editor

The Manteca Bulletin, Wed., April 10, 2013

It isn't always easy being green.

Just ask the City of Manteca.

The city has the start of the solution for significant water conservation and – under the Global Warming Solutions Act mandate – reducing greenhouse gas in place but isn't pulling the trigger.

Municipal leaders are gun shy about proceeding with the use of treated wastewater to irrigate the Big League Dreams sports complex and landscaping in and around Stadium Retail Center due to unclear and ambiguous state regulations.

"The rules the state has made aren't very clear," noted Manteca Public Works Director Mark Houghton. "We're going to let someone else get out in the front of this one. We don't want to be the guinea pig this time around."

The guinea pig Houghton is referring to is the ill-fated and costly city attempt to meet a previous air quality objective imposed by state agencies by using methane gas to co-generate power to run the wastewater treatment plant.

The methane gas – which is still being burned off today into the valley's polluted skies – is an unavoidable byproduct of the treatment process. The Environmental Protection Agency is so convinced that methane gas is detrimental to health that they have even targeted another big methane source - dairy cows.

Manteca in 2002 had a plan - and the tentative blessing of the state Air Resources Board - to eliminate methane gas pollution at the treatment plant.

In doing so, they could also reduce Manteca's \$1 million annual power bill to run the treatment plant by 40 percent.

Eleven years later, the \$600,000 package plant sits unused while methane gas continues to add to the woes of the San Joaquin Valley - described by the federal government as one of the two dirtiest air basins in the nation.

That's because between ordering the co-gen plant and taking delivery - the state changed the rules for such equipment. It determined the diesel-powered plant wasn't clean enough even though the net reduction in air pollution from elimination of the methane gas would still be overwhelmingly significant.

That's one example why local government officials throughout California are a little more than tepid about the mandates of Assembly Bill 32.

Manteca has had purple pipe - the color universally given to pipe containing recycled treated wastewater used for landscaping and even crop irrigation - in the ground since the dawn of the 21st century. They continue to put it in place as development occurs so the system will be there when it eventually is utilized.

But they are in no rush to move forward even though the city had gotten a tentative OK from the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Board to do so. That's because, as Houghton notes, the rules for recycled wastewater's uses are murky.

Meanwhile, Manteca has found a way to reduce the use of expensive treated water to irrigate many parks by tapping into non-potable water from high water tables. Such a well has already been put in place at the Big League Dreams sports complex for temporary use until the state can be clear on how Manteca can utilize its purple pipe water permit.

The solution reduces water use and saves money at the same time. Being able to use recycled wastewater to do the same park irrigation would increase those savings.

Air quality gurus have prompted Manteca to include a 20 percent reduction in water in the mandated global warming solutions plan now being formulated. It is a way to meet the city's state mandated goal of cutting overall greenhouse gas production from private and public sources within the city limits by 12,014 metric tons by 2020. That goal also takes into account city growth.

The reduction in pollution is tied directly to city wells that pump water from underground aquifers as well as other power needed for the water treatment process at both the well heads and the water Manteca receives from the South County Surface Water Treatment Plant. That surface water plant already is powered mostly by a massive solar farm next door on Dodds Road near Woodward Reservoir.

Manteca as an entire community generated 408,869 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalents in 2010. Based on growth projections and current usage, Manteca will generate 548,437 metric tons of emissions in 2020. State regulations being implemented on everything from how car engines are built to blanket air quality standards and water use regulations is expected to whittle that number down to 441,668 metric tons in 2020. Manteca's community target as assigned by the state, though, is 429,693 metric tons of emissions.

That means Manteca has to come up with city driven ways to reduce projected emissions by another 12,014 metrics tons a year.

TURLOCK NOW: Turlock Police hope to drive green

By Marijke Rowland

Modesto Bee, Tuesday, April 9, 2013

The Turlock Police Department could be cruising green soon.

Council members will consider an amended grant proposal Tuesday to the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District that could pay for eight new clean energy vehicles for the Turlock police.

The grant application asks for some \$98,800 to pay for electric patrol scooters and hybrid electric cars. The money would fully fund four 2013 Trikke Tribred Patrol electric scooters and partially pay for four 2013 Ford Fusion plug-in hybrid cars.

The Turlock Police Department has applied for money for the vehicles through the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District Public Benefit Program. The program pays up to \$100,000 to fully or partially pay for up to \$20,000 per vehicle.

The Ford Fusions would replace existing police fleet vehicles. The electric scooters would be used in crowded events like street festivals or the Stanislaus County Fair.

The city has previously applied for the grant in March, but changes to vehicle eligibility specifications required the application be resubmitted. The city would not be required to pay a matching fee for the grant money, though they would pick up the remaining \$11,100 left on the \$31,100 purchase price for each Ford Fusion.

More car purchases could also be in the city's future as council members will also vote on whether to spend some \$132,000 on five new pickup trucks for its Parks, Recreation and Public Facilities Division and Municipal Services Department.

Due to repair and maintenance costs, the city is replacing five of its pickup trucks. The city will replace the old vehicles, which will be surplus, with 2013 Chevrolet 2500 HD Regular trucks.

The city awards such purchase contracts to the lowest responsible bidder. They received three bids and went with Turlock's Smith Chevrolet Cadillac which offered each vehicle for \$26,453.

CARB gets new executive officer

Central Valley Business Times, Saturday, April 6, 2013

Richard Corey has been appointed as the new executive officer of the California Air Resources Board.

"Richard brings 28 years of professional experience to this position, including an impressive track record of strong managerial accomplishments within ARB," says CARB Chairman Mary Nichols.

It's a promotion for Mr. Corey, who has served as deputy executive officer overseeing the Stationary Source Division where he was responsible for a broad range of programs including fuels, incentives, air toxics, and climate change.

Most recently in the area of climate change programs he oversaw the establishment of the second largest carbon market in the world, supervising the development and implementation of California's pioneering cap and trade regulation, including the first two successful auctions of carbon allowances.

Corey has been responsible for implementing a wide

He takes over from James Goldstene, who was recently appointed undersecretary at the California State and Consumer Services Agency.