

Valley Sky-Lines

February, 2004
Volume 4, Issue 1

Coordinator's Corner

By Dan Hyde



“Is the Sky Falling?”

AFV industry news articles recently have announced that Ford Motor Company will eliminate production of all its natural gas and propane-powered vehicles after the 2004 model year, and many have begun to speculate on the impact the announcement will have on the AFV industry both nationally and locally.



Hybrid-electric version of the 2004 Escape — Ford shifts emphasis from EVs and NGVs to hybrids

In explaining the company's decision, a Ford official indicated that “We have shifted our emphases from EV (battery-electric vehicles) and natural gas (vehicles) to hybrids.” Ford will begin selling a hybrid-electric version of the Escape mid-sized sport utility vehicle in late summer. The official went on to say that the company is also moving forward with internal combustion hydrogen development programs, which use a similar technology as its natural gas vehicles. Internal combustion, hydrogen-fueled vehicles would be even cleaner burning than natural gas vehicles.

However, fleet operators who have been purchasing and operating AFVs for years know that the AFV industry is one of constant change, requiring flexibility and creativity to make AFV programs work. And the really committed AFV fleet operators will see this as just another opportunity to be creative.

Before we conclude that the sky is falling, let's look realistically at the situation.

First, most of Ford's vehicle production is light-duty sedans, pickup trucks and vans. Their announcement will have little or no impact on medium and heavy-duty vehicle purchases—which is where it makes the most sense to use AFVs for both fuel displacement and air quality reasons.

News articles have opined that the move away from the clean burning technology by a Big Three manufacturer will be a blow to federal and state fleets struggling to meet alternative fuel vehicle purchasing requirements, as well as regions that see the vehicles as a component to meeting federal air quality standards. Like Henny Penny in the famous children's story, some have interpreted the announcement to mean that “the AFV sky is falling!”

FUTURE MEETINGS

April 1, 2004
Special Fleet Managers' Symposium
“AFVs for Passenger Transportation”
Mountain Crest Park
4701 N. Durango

10:00 a.m. Board of Directors
12:00 p.m. Lunch & Symposium

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June 3, 2004
Stakeholders' and Board Meetings

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August 5, 2004
Stakeholders' and Board Meetings

LVRCC Presents First Annual Achievement Awards

At its December 4 holiday luncheon, the Las Vegas Regional Clean Cities Coalition presented its first Annual Achievement Awards to nine award winners. Three of the awards were determined by nomination by stakeholders, and the remainder were determined by analyzing alternative fuel statistics provided by the Nevada Department of Environmental Protection.



Frank Giordano (Clark Co. School Dist.), Jack Owens (Yellow Checker Star), Dan Hyde (City of Las Vegas), Wayne Meissner (RTC of So. Nevada), Jim Zeimet (Clark Co. Water Rec. Dist.), Doug Keene (LV Valley Water Dist.)

There are now more than 6,000 AFVs operating in the Las Vegas Valley, reflecting annual growth of 16% over 2002.

There were ties in two categories. The award winners included:

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| • Yellow Checker Star Transportation— | “Best Dressed” AFVs |
| • RTC of Southern Nevada— | “Best Dressed” AFVs |
| • Las Vegas Valley Water District— | More than 50% AFVs in Fleet |
| • Clark County School District— | More than 50% AFVs in Fleet |
| • Clark Co. Water Reclamation District— | More than 50% AFVs in Fleet |
| • University of Nevada, Las Vegas— | Greatest Alt Fuel Use in Bi-Fuel Vehicles |
| • Dan Hyde, City of Las Vegas— | Most Outspoken Advocate |
| • Ray Burke, City of North Las Vegas— | Most Outspoken Advocate |

LVRCC to Host Special Meeting for Passenger Transportation Fleets

LVRCC will host a special fleet managers’ symposium on April 1 at Mountain Crest Park. The theme for the event is “AFVs for Passenger Transportation,” and we are planning for more than 50 taxi fleet operators, limousine fleet operators, private shuttle bus operators and hotel shuttle bus operators to attend.

The event will begin with a sponsored lunch at 12:00 p.m. and will feature a concise agenda related directly to fleets that provide passenger transportation in Las Vegas. Topics will include:

- Why AFVs make sense for passenger transportation
- What passenger transportation alternative fuel vehicles are available for purchase today
- What fuels and fueling options are best for passenger transportation fleets
- Plus a vehicle exhibit and Ride & Drive.

If you are interested in attending this event, please visit our website for more information at www.lasvegascleancities.org or contact Deb Wolfram, Thomason & Associates, at (702) 254-4180 ext 24.

“Is the Sky Falling?”

(continued from page 1)

Secondly, negotiations are already under way with Ford Motor Company to reinstitute a “Qualified Vehicle Modifier” or QVM program whereby natural gas and/or propane Ford vehicles still would be produced but just not on the assembly line. This is a practice often used by vehicle manufacturers, and Ford officials have agreed to give it consideration according to Rich Kolodziej, President of the Natural Gas Vehicle Coalition in Washington, D.C.

Thirdly, there are still light-duty natural gas powered sedans, pickup trucks and vans available from American Honda and General Motors, as well as BayTech and a number of other certified OEMs. This may be an opportunity for fleet managers to experience some other manufacturers’ vehicles and enjoy a difference.




GM Sierra Natural Gas Bi-fuel Pick-up Truck

The Henny Pennys of the world would have us believe “the sky is falling, the sky is falling.” The sky is not falling....the AFV industry is evolving—which is exactly what it’s supposed to do.

Light-duty natural gas vehicles are still available from American Honda, General Motors and other certified OEMs.

10th Annual
Clean Cities Conference and Expo
May 2 – 5, 2004
Fort Lauderdale, FL



Upcoming AFV Events	
<p>March 7 -10, 2004</p> <p><i>1st Intl Fuel Cell Conference Development and Deployment</i> University of Connecticut, CT Sponsored by University of CT Global Fuel Center Registration: (860) 486-3295</p>	<p>May 2 - 5, 2004</p> <p><i>10th National Clean Cities Conference and Expo</i> Fort Lauderdale, FL Sponsored by US DOE and Gold Coast Clean Cities Registration: www.cities.gov or (800) CCITIES</p>
<p>March 23 - 24, 2004</p> <p><i>Natural Gas Fueling Station Technology Forum</i> Las Vegas, NV Sponsored by NGV Institute Registration: www.ngvi.com or call (800) 510-6484</p>	<p>May 17 – 19, 2004</p> <p><i>National Idling Reduction Conference</i> Sponsored by US DOE, US DOT, US EPA and NY State Energy Research & Development Authority Registration: (202) 488-2472</p>
<p>April 13, 2004</p> <p><i>Earth Technologies Forum</i> Sponsored by International Climate Change Partnership, US DOE, US EPA Registration: (703) 807-4052</p>	<p>May 24 - 26, 2004</p> <p><i>Natural Gas Vehicle Safety Training Course</i> Las Vegas, NV Sponsored by NGV Institute Registration: www.ngvi.com or call (800) 510-6484</p>

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LVRCC Receives \$25,000 Grant

The Las Vegas Regional Clean Cities Coalition has been awarded a \$25,000 grant in response to a proposal submitted to the U.S. Department of Energy's annual State Energy Program Special Project Solicitation. The funds will be administered through the Nevada State Office of Energy from October 1, 2003 through September 30, 2004.

Las Vegas competed with dozens of other Clean Cities coalitions from around the country for the grant funds, and was one of only twenty selected. To be eligible for the funds, LVRCC had to submit a detailed proposal describing how it will meet 10 major objectives, including:

- Host two targeted niche market events in conjunction with a vehicle manufacturer
- Introduce three new heavy-duty fleets to the concept of alternative fuels
- Bring two new fleets to the National Clean Cities conference
- Collect all regional alternative fuel sales information
- Develop and implement a plan for coalition financial sustainability
- Host at least four stakeholder meetings per year
- Meet with four local or state policy staff members on the benefits of alternative fuels
- Attend at least two national Clean Cities events

- Develop a plan to meet the Clean Cities performance goal to increase AFVs by 17% per year
- Invite 50 new organizations to join the coalition.

The grant award also required matching funds of 50%, which was provided from a local grant from the Clark County Department of Air Quality Management.

“Our annual operating plan already provides for LVRCC to achieve most of these objectives,” noted Dan Hyde, coordinator. “This grant funding, however, will help us to accelerate expansion into other high fuel use markets—like the heavy-duty vehicle market. This market uses more fuel (imported oil)—and traditionally the vehicles produce more emissions, too, than light-duty vehicles like sedans and pick up trucks. It’s a perfect target market for alternative fuels.”

The Truckee Meadows Clean Cities Coalition, located in Washoe County, Nevada, was also awarded \$25,000, combining with the Las Vegas award to create a major success story for the entire state. “We’re very pleased that the national Clean Cities organization has recognized both the past successes—as well as the future potential—of both of the Clean Cities Coalitions in Nevada,” said Dave McNeil, State Energy Program Manager and Acting Director for the Nevada State Office of Energy.

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Las Vegas Regional Clean Cities Coalition

Valley Sky-Lines is published quarterly for the Las Vegas Regional Clean Cities Coalition by Thomason & Associates, Inc., a Las Vegas-based alternative fuel consulting firm since 1989. We welcome your news stories and appreciate your comments and suggestions. We look forward to hearing from you!

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