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NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Hurricane Katrina Relief Effort Fueled with Biodiesel *Biodiesel advocates donate fuel to help meet one of area's greatest needs*

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. – Biodiesel deliveries are rolling into the Gulf Coast in an effort to provide the hurricane-stricken areas with urgently needed fuel. Biodiesel, a non-toxic, biodegradable fuel made from renewable resources such as soybean oil and other fats and vegetable oils, works in any diesel engine, including generators.

The Veggie Van Organization, a nonprofit advocacy group based in Venice, Calif., has partnered with West Central, a farmer-owned biodiesel company based in Iowa, and the Naples City Council in Florida to transport 13,000 gallons of biodiesel to help victims. The relief effort will focus on smaller coastal towns south of New Orleans that were among the areas most severely affected by Hurricane Katrina. The donated fuel will power a former military ship owned by Sub Sea Research, as well as makeshift medical facilities and emergency generators aboard the vessel. The ship is scheduled to leave Sept. 16 and will take several tons of food, water, ice and relief supplies to the victims in devastated areas near the mouth of the Mississippi River.

“This was the first area hit and it has received little emergency aid or attention,” said Josh Tickell, biodiesel advocate and founder of the Veggie Van Organization. “Thanks to the biodiesel fuel donated by West Central and the donations we received online, we’ll be able to help people who need it most and document the work on our website. A second biodiesel tanker truck will meet us in Louisiana.” Tickell, who is going on the voyage, grew up in Louisiana and has been promoting biodiesel since 1997, when he toured the United States in his biodiesel powered “Veggie Van.”

“People are suffering and this is a time when their fellow Americans should come together to do whatever they can to help,” said Joe Jobe, chief executive officer of the National Biodiesel Board, which is helping to coordinate the biodiesel donations from West Central and other biodiesel producers. “Food companies are sending food, clothing companies are sending clothes, and individuals are sending money. As a fuel industry organization, we are trying to help relieve fuel supply shortages in the region.”

Dr. Bailus Walker, a vice president of the American Public Health Association, noted that biodiesel significantly reduces emissions compared to regular diesel, including those that pose a health threat.

“Biodiesel’s health benefits extend beyond keeping hospitals and emergency vehicles running at this critical time,” Dr. Walker said. “Because biodiesel reduces air toxics, particulate matter, carbon monoxide and other harmful emissions, it can be particularly helpful to people who have pulmonary and cardiovascular diseases as well as contribute to overall better air quality for everyone.”

Biodiesel has the highest energy balance of any fuel and can be used in its pure form (B100), or blended with petroleum diesel at any level. Nationwide, more than 500 major fleets now use biodiesel commercially, and more than 500 retail filling stations also make it available to the public.

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To follow the journey or make a donation, visit www.veggievan.org. Readers can learn more about biodiesel by visiting www.biodiesel.org.