



MICHIGAN SOYBEAN PROMOTION COMMITTEE

a new release



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Michigan School Bus Fleet Manager among Winners of National “Eye on Biodiesel” Awards

In 2002, Wayne Hettler, fleet manager for St. Johns Public Schools, led the state of Michigan, and perhaps the nation, to become the first school bus fleet to switch to B20, a 20 percent blend of soy biodiesel. But, change didn't come all at once for Hettler. He knew he needed some data to show the school board the possible cost savings with B20, so only Wayne and a few of his maintenance personnel knew that a handful of the buses and service vehicles were changed over.

After tallying the data from those vehicles, Hettler presented his findings to the school board. Once they heard what soy biodiesel could do for their fleet, St. Johns was on their way to B20 in their entire fleet. Hettler tracked statistics like the time the buses idle, the miles per hour they drive, oil analysis, and the mileage the buses get. All along, Hettler has claimed he has saved money in several areas for St. Johns.

“First, I'm convinced,” noted Hettler, “that we were able to extend the oil changes because the B20 burns cleaner and isn't dirtying the oil as quickly. We solely credit biodiesel for cleaning up the oil, thus saving the district the costs of oil, filters, labor and the like.”

“Second,” Wayne continued, “we've experienced improved lubricity leading to longer fuel pump life which we based on pre-April of 2002 data. Prior to April 2002 we averaged one fuel pump change in our fleet per year. Since 2002, we've only changed one of the fuel pumps in the fleet.”

“One other item of significance particularly relating to the cost savings is that our average miles per gallon increased,” added Hettler. “Before April 2002 our fleet's mileage averaged 8.1 MPG. Upon switching to B20, our average increased to 8.8. That's a HUGE difference in MPG for buses!”

St. Johns experiences with biodiesel and their proven cost savings led Hettler to inspire others to make the change to biodiesel. “I was taking calls from all over the nation about our experiences with biodiesel,” Hettler said. “I know that over time, many fleets made the change to biodiesel.”

Biodiesel is a domestically-produced source of energy and it's made from the oil in soybeans grown right here in the U.S.A. It's safe, renewable, and dependable. “We're also using soy biodiesel for the health benefits for all of us, the environment, and to support America's soybean farmers,” Hettler said and concluded with, “and by last fall, our fleet tallied over 3 million miles all on biodiesel use since April 2002.”

Gail Frahm, Executive Director of the Michigan Soybean Promotion Committee said, “Wayne has been a true inspiration to the entire biodiesel industry, and thus, a supporter of soybean farmers. He is always thinking ahead and seeing how he can save the school district some funds while also helping the local economy, in this case, Michigan's soybean farmers. For these and many other reasons, we felt it was important to nominate Wayne for this prestigious award and congratulate him on his receipt of it.”

The National Biodiesel Board recognized Hettler and other biodiesel champions, each with their own “Eye on Biodiesel” award. The awards were presented at the National Biodiesel Conference & Expo yesterday in Grapevine, Texas.

The NBB’s 2010 “Eye on Biodiesel Award” categories and their winners are:

Inspiration: Wayne Hettler, St. Johns Public Schools, St. Johns, Mich. This Michigan school bus fleet manager convinced his district to switch to B20 in 2002. They have since clocked more than 3 million miles on B20. Wayne’s enthusiasm for soy biodiesel has helped inspire other fleets make the switch. He has talked to many school districts and other fleets from across the U.S., offering technical advice and support. Hettler also partnered with NBB to provide detailed data on maintenance. His records showed that thanks to fewer oil changes and not needing to buy fuel conditioner, his fleet saved money with soy biodiesel.

Impact: Terry Taylor, Sysco Corporation. Sysco, North America's leading foodservice marketer and distributor, has led the way in implementing biodiesel in private industry. The company first began using biodiesel in 2005 as part of its comprehensive sustainability program. Terry Taylor, Sr., Director – National Purchasing, says he saw it as a greener alternative that was a simple way to help our country also reduce its use of foreign oil. Sysco has distribution centers across the nation and in Canada and has a company policy to use biodiesel blends, wherever possible, up to B20. The company today uses about 2 million gallons annually of blended product in its fleet of 9,000 diesel tractors and straight trucks, and 11,000 refrigerated trailers.

Industry Partnership: The American Oil Chemists' Society and Gina Clapper. AOCS is a global professional scientific society in the fats, oils, surfactants, detergents and related materials fields. In keeping with its mission to be a forum to promote the exchange of ideas, information, and experience, AOCS has provided numerous opportunities for those in the biodiesel field to share knowledge, including two international congresses on biodiesel, several publications, short courses, and technical sessions at its annual meeting. Technical Specialist Gina Clapper has been instrumental in coordinating the development and approval of new biodiesel test methods. Faster, simpler, more cost-effective tests help the industry provide high quality biodiesel meeting ASTM standards at a lower cost to consumers. Clapper also has taken leadership roles within International Organization for Standardization (ISO) activities and the Biodiesel Expert Panel of the AOCS.

Initiative: The Iowa Soybean Association, Minnesota Soybean Growers Association, and Nebraska Soybean Association. When NBB issued a call to action for the biodiesel industry to submit comments to EPA on its proposed Renewable Fuels Standard rules, soybean farmers answered the call. These three organizations led the way for the biodiesel industry in submitting comments into the EPA. They alone generated more than a third of the 8,000 comments biodiesel supporters submitted regarding the proposed standard. The result demonstrated biodiesel's and the Renewable Fuel Standard's importance to a broad range of stakeholders.

Influence: Ramiro Lopez, City of Irving, Texas. Lopez initiated B20 in the City of Dallas in 2002. Since then he has mentored other fleets, and about a dozen fleets now use biodiesel in the area. He has also mentored fleets nationwide, and spoken at national events about his successful program. He now works for the City of Irving.

“The biodiesel industry is blessed with many champions and true believers,” said Joe Jobe, NBB CEO. “Each of these winners has helped carry the biodiesel torch, fostering understanding, mentoring others and encouraging broader use of a cleaner burning, sustainable fuel.” The National Biodiesel Board is the national trade association of the biodiesel industry and can be visited on-line at www.biodiesel.org.

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NOTE TO EDITOR: An electronic photo of Wayne accepting his award is available by contacting the soybean office at gfrahm@michigansoybean.org or 989.652.3294.