

SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES

Emory reaches milestone with introduction of biodiesel fuel



Erik Fyfe (C'06) explains Emory's biodiesel program to reporter Blair Meeks.

BY HELEN ANNE RICHARDS

Cliff shuttles are using a new fuel — one that's renewable, environmentally friendly and readily available. It's biodiesel, and it's being made from waste cooking oil gathered from Emory's kitchens.

Last month with the introduction of the new fuel, Emory

reached a milestone in its effort to reduce the amount of fossil fuel it uses. Of the 58 Cliff shuttles, 24 are using a biodiesel blend. The remainder of the fleet is fueled by either compressed natural gas or electricity. Emory's bus fleet is now 100 percent alternatively fueled.

The diesel shuttles currently use a "B5" biodiesel blend — 5 percent biodiesel and 95 percent diesel derived from

petroleum. Emory plans to increase the blend to B20 — 20 percent biodiesel — in the next several months, and ultimately has plans to use 100 percent biodiesel.

"Cooking oil used to feed students is now taking them around campus," said Laura Ray, associate vice president, transportation and parking. "All the cooking oil we need right now is within a 10-mile radius of campus."

Biodiesel and raw cooking oil, however, are not the same, even though biodiesel is derived from cooking oil. Restaurants pay to have waste oil removed from their kitchens, putting an economic drain on the business. With biodiesel conversion, restaurants no longer pay to have the oil removed and may even be able to sell oil byproducts.

The Southern Alliance for Clean Energy, Emory's partner in the biodiesel program, collects the cooking oil from campus kitchens, as well as area restaurants, and filters it to remove food particles. Then, a simple chemical process separates the oil. Two products are left from the process — methyl esters, the chemical name

for biodiesel, and glycerin, a byproduct that can be sold for use in soaps and other products. Biodiesel is biodegradable, nontoxic, and essentially free of sulfur and aromatics.

"The biodiesel program fits squarely within Emory's goals for sustainability," said Ciannat Howett, director of sustainability initiatives. "Emory is seeking ways to reduce waste, lower air pollution emissions, and improve energy efficiency in order to preserve a high quality of life for ourselves and future generations."

Ray said that the program is also a "perfect storm" of a student's vision and Emory's vision complementing each other. She said Erik Fyfe, a 2006 Emory College graduate, came to her last February to suggest a biodiesel program for the University. The conversion to the new fuel is due in large part to the collaboration among Fyfe, Emory transportation officials and SACE.

Fyfe, now employed by SACE as a refuel program project coordinator, is pleased that the program is working on campus, but envisions larger applications throughout the Atlanta community.

"SACE can produce more energy than Emory needs," Fyfe said. "Georgia exported 75 percent of the biodiesel it produced last year. We have trouble distributing in a state with no retail locations."

Fyfe believes, however, that programs like Emory's will spread to other organizations in the metro area. Already, he says, cities and counties are interested in the possibilities of fueling the vehicles they operate with biodiesel.

"Emory's program is seeding the market," he said. With growing interest and more vehicles running on biodiesel, demand should grow for the fuel and the cost should decrease, he said.

SACE currently delivers Emory's biodiesel to the bus maintenance center on Johnson Road, Ray said, and fuels Emory vehicles only. Future plans, she said, include a retail center for private vehicles.

"By transforming our shuttle buses into a 100 percent alternatively fueled fleet," Howett said, "we are providing a model that can be adopted by other universities, cities and businesses around the country."

Build it and they will come: Survey results in for mixed-use project

BY KELLY GRAY

What else is needed on Clifton Road? That was one of 25 questions the Clifton Community Partnership asked its stakeholders during an online survey in September. The survey was developed to solicit input from Emory faculty and staff and the Clifton community to measure interest in a range of options proposed for the planned retail-residential project on Clifton Road, across from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The CCP's outreach to the community on the Clifton Road mixed-use development is supportive of Emory's strategic plan and its challenge of "Creating Community — Engaging Society." The CCP, in conjunction with Emory, will focus on four areas as it works to improve the quality of life in the Clifton community: activity centers, housing alternatives, transportation choices, and pedestrian-friendly streetscapes. This proposed development is a project that will support each of these focus areas.

After survey responses were calculated, the results were shared with Emory's proposed partner in the development, Cousins Properties Inc. Cousins Properties will use the survey to help shape the proposed retail mix. Preliminary work on this site is expected to begin late next summer.

The key objective of the survey was to determine what retail, entertainment and service options should be included in the site. An overwhelming majority of survey participants recommended including a café, a specialty market and a specialty restaurant.

After establishing the level of interest in each feature, the likelihood and usage for services offered during various times of the day was examined. Respondents indicated that they would like a café that was open primarily during the lunch time hours, but also on mornings, nights and weekends. The specialty restaurant response was much the same, with lunch and dinner hours favored. Respondents indicated that it was most important for the specialty market to be open in the evening hours.

One of the questions in the survey was open-ended. When asked what other services or retail options they would include in the new project, 475 responses were generated. The responses ranged from general ideas to naming specific merchants.

Comments from the survey revealed what was widely known for those currently working on or near Clifton road. "Too little time," "too much traffic" or "nothing is within walking distance" were comments that repeated in survey responses when participants were asked about leaving their offices during the workday. Many of the participants indicated an interest in leaving

campus or their workplace for lunch if there were a way to get there quickly, without moving their vehicles.

When survey participants were asked about their current practices for leaving campus or the workplace during the day for lunch or to run errands, there were no real surprises. Over half of the respondents (51 percent) said they leave campus or their workplace for lunch. When asked about the distance they are willing to travel for lunch, 53 percent of

the respondents said they walk to a place nearby and 58 percent said they drive to a place nearby. These results underscore the need for a range of retail and service options along Clifton Road.

The survey was distributed through an e-mail blast to Emory faculty and staff, community members and the Clifton Community Partnership Advisory Group. An additional e-mail was sent to Emory Healthcare employees.

The CCP received more than 1,300 responses to the survey and more than 200 additional comments were received via e-mail. The majority of respondents (72 percent) were women and respondents were evenly divided by age and income level.

Complete survey results and a mixed-use report developed for the site can be found on the CCP Web site at www.cliftoncommunitypartnership.org.

Coca-Cola flavors Copper Chef competition



dining services. The competition ended in a tie, with the clever chefs incorporating the "secret ingredient" — in this case, Coca-Cola — mostly into sauces and reductions.

Emory Executive Chef Ephraim Lawson and Culinary Club member Gillian Locascio compete in the Copper Chef competition held Nov. 16 in Dobbs University Center. The third annual event, inspired by the hit TV show "Iron Chef," featured a culinary battle between two student groups with the help of professional assistants from Emory