

County prodded to use E30 fuel in fleet vehicles

Glacial Lakes Energy CEO says ethanol blend better for budget, local economy

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Glacial Lakes Energy CEO Jim Seurer appeared before the Codrington County Commission at its Tuesday meeting to encourage the county to take the “E30 Challenge,” and consider using an E30 blend of fuel in county vehicles.

The E30 Challenge is an initiative from GLE to encourage individuals and organizations to begin using a blend of fuel containing 30 percent ethanol.

As part of the initiative, GLE intends to promote E30 in the community and hold seminars with dealerships, technical colleges, city police and fleet managers, farmers unions and automotive mechanics.

“The EPA a couple of years ago approved E15, which is 15 percent ethanol, in all vehicles 2001 and newer,” Seurer said. “We have reason to believe they shouldn’t have stopped there, that they could go on up to E30. ... Some of that information is now being backed up by auto dealers and auto manufacturers.”

Countries like Brazil make wide use of E30 in vehicles in the same types of cars with the same types of engines. However, in the United States, the oil industry actively works against the ethanol industry.

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“The challenge in our country is the oil industry, and we have this battle with them that never ends. It continues, and they outspend us 10 or 12 to 1, and we constantly are fighting for a position and foothold.

“We think there’s a chance for E30 to make its way across the country similar to what E10 did years ago; it started in the center part of the country and moved to the coasts.”

Seurer promoted the fact GLE is a locally owned company, with over 60 percent of its shareholders living in the Watertown area.

Andy Wicks, founder of DynoTune Speed and Performance in Watertown, a company specializing in enhancing high performance fuel injected vehicles, also talked about the benefits of E30 to the commission.

Wicks serves as GLE’s mechanical expert and test facilitator and has conducted numerous tests using E30 in

non-flex fuel vehicles. Wicks said since E30 is high octane fuel, even higher than in premium fuel, it can increase fuel efficiency, horsepower and torque.

The results also show E30 is typically not the cause of a “check engine” light and said most vehicles built in the last 20 years can handle higher blends of ethanol.

Todd Warne, chief mechanic of the County Highway Department, told the commission his department has vehicles in its fleet dating back to the 1960s and 1970s, which he did not think could handle the higher blend.

Wicks said the program was geared toward newer vehicles, and it might not be right for older vehicles such as the ones Warne was discussing.

Brian Brunner, GLE’s Ethanol Marketing Manager said the company would be offering discounts on the E30 blend. And while the company was unaware of any problems with vehicles directly

as a result of E30, if its use is directly responsible for any problems with county vehicles, “We’re going to make it right.”

The commission will continue its discussion on participating in the program at meeting next week.