

NREL/DOE Launch New Alternative Transportation Web Tools

National Renewable Energy Laboratory

The U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) has launched a new tool and redesigned DOE's Alternative Fuels Data Center Web site to help fleet managers, municipalities and consumers choose from a wide variety of alternative fuels and energy efficiency strategies for reducing petroleum use, vehicle emissions, and operating costs.

The AFDC's new [Petroleum Reduction Planning Tool](#) [1] is an interactive Web application that allows fleet managers to evaluate the benefits associated with five alternative fuels - biodiesel, electricity, ethanol, natural gas and propane - along with a variety of efficiency measures, such as idle reduction and fuel economy improvements.

"Fleets across the country are trying to reduce their vulnerability to spikes in oil prices and are finding themselves increasingly subject to greenhouse gas emissions limitations at the federal, state and local levels," NREL Project Manager Witt Sparks said. "This tool provides valuable information on a variety of strategies that can help them reach their desired and even required outcomes. From a single web page, a fleet manager can explore multiple strategies and know what the energy and environmental impacts will likely be before making any substantial investments."

Users of the Petroleum Reduction Planning Tool can also explore options for fleet improvements by creating "what-if" scenarios based on solid data. For example:

- "What if I replace 10 of my sedans with plug-in hybrid electric vehicles?"
- "What if I start using B20 biodiesel in my heavy-duty trucks?"
- "What if I convert my pickup trucks to run on natural gas or propane?"

Once a user or fleet manager establishes a set of measurable objectives to meet their desired goals, he or she can save the plan, make adjustments as needed or continue to investigate different scenarios. Easy-to-read charts and tables display annual reductions in emissions, petroleum use and fuel costs. Additionally, each section of the tool links to educational resources that provide background information on each efficiency strategy and alternative fuel.

The redesigned [Alternative Fuels Data Center](#) [2] (AFDC) is recognized as the go-to source for sustainable transportation decision-makers. It provides a vast collection of information, data and tools that facilitate the deployment of alternative fuels, advanced vehicles and fuel economy improvements. The AFDC is part of a suite of resources provided by the Energy Department's Clean Cities program, an initiative

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to reduce petroleum use in transportation through local public-private partnerships.

Among the features on the new site is a [large library of maps and data](#) [3], which users can view and customize through interactive charts and graphics. Featured data sets cover a wide range of transportation topics, including alternative fuel use trends, driving habits, hybrid vehicle availability, biofuels production, transportation regulations and incentives and vehicle greenhouse gas emissions.

One of the AFDC's most popular tools is the updated [Alternative Fueling Station Locator](#) [4]. This application allows drivers and fleet managers to find stations that offer electric vehicle charging, E85, biodiesel, natural gas, propane and hydrogen. Users can sort by fuel type, find all stations near a given location, or map a route with stations identified along the way. The tool also identifies the number of available stations by state and technology across the nation. As part of the tool's new design, users can now easily embed the Station Locator into their own websites. Once embedded on another site, the tool will continue to access and display the most current station location data available on the AFDC.

In addition to tools and data, the AFDC also features a [large collection of case studies](#) [5] in alternative transportation deployment, in both written and video formats.

"These stories serve as road maps for fleets and drivers, so they can learn how others overcame barriers and found success," AFDC Manager Trish Cozart said. "Users can find real-life examples of fleets that run on biodiesel, cities that have developed electric vehicle charging infrastructure, and school districts that power their buses with propane."

Clean Cities is the deployment arm of the U.S. Department of Energy's Vehicle Technologies Program. Through the work of nearly 100 local coalitions, Clean Cities brings together stakeholders in the public and private sectors to deploy alternative and renewable fuels, idle-reduction measures, fuel economy improvements, and emerging sustainable transportation technologies.

NREL is the U.S. Department of Energy's primary national laboratory for renewable energy and energy efficiency research and development. NREL is operated for DOE by The Alliance for Sustainable Energy, LLC.

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Links:

[1] <http://www.afdc.energy.gov/prep>

[2] <http://www.afdc.energy.gov/>

[3] <http://www.afdc.energy.gov/data>

[4] <http://www.afdc.energy.gov/stations>

[5] <http://www.afdc.energy.gov/case>

[6] <http://www.nrel.gov/>

[7] <http://www.nrel.gov/news/press/2012/2028.html>