

DOE Brings Together Private-Sector Leaders to Reduce Petroleum Use

The National Clean Fleets Partnership is helping America's largest commercial fleets speed the adoption of alternative fuels, electric vehicles, and fuel economy improvements.

In April 2011, President Barack Obama announced the launch of the National Clean Fleets Partnership – an initiative to reduce the country's dependence on imported oil. Less than a year later, the partnership has grown to include 14 of the nation's largest private-sector fleets (noted in sidebar).

Together, the partners operate more than 1 million vehicles across the nation and are pace-setters that other fleets often look to for innovative advances. They represent immense potential for petroleum savings and the power to reshape markets by accelerating the adoption of alternative fuels, advanced vehicles, and smarter, more fuel-efficient operating practices.

“Individually, these companies operate on a very large scale,” said Mark Smith, who manages the national partnership efforts for the DOE Vehicle Technologies Program's Clean Cities initiative. “When any one of them chooses to use an alternative fuel like natural gas, electricity, or biodiesel in place of conventional fuels, there is a tangible positive impact on the communities in which they do business. And by joining forces with one another and with Clean Cities, they realize efficiencies and synergies that stand to shift the way we power transportation in this country.”

Through Clean Cities, several of the National Clean Fleets Partners have received technical assistance from the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) in Golden, Colorado, to deploy natural gas vehicles. National lab experts have helped to identify dozens of natural gas fueling stations in markets where partners operate and assisted them in building business relationships with private-sector station owners. In some cases, stations have performed facility upgrades to handle the increased volume of fuel sales and the technical requirements of a given fleet's vehicles.

NREL is also in the process of gathering data from the partners for “hot-spot analysis.” Using fleet vehicle data, fleet facility locations, and alternative fuel infrastructure data, NREL will identify prime locations where multiple Clean Fleets Partners collectively operate a sufficient number of vehicles to justify infrastructure development. On its own, a single fleet may not be able to support the development of a new fueling station. But by evaluating where the partners' fleet operations overlap, we can identify hot spots in which there is a clear business case for multiple fleets to make the switch to alternative fuels.

Companies that have joined the National Clean Fleets Partnership are also pursuing fuel economy strategies to reduce their petroleum use. As an example, NREL is working directly with Verizon to collect daily operating data from their medium-duty service vehicles. The data will be analyzed to characterize

National Clean Fleets Partners

AT&T

Coca-Cola

Enterprise Holdings (Alamo Rent A Car, Enterprise Rent-A-Car, and National Car Rental)

FedEx

Frito-Lay

GE

OSRAM SYLVANIA

PepsiCo

Ryder

Schwan's Home Service

Staples

ThyssenKrupp Elevator

UPS

Verizon

usage patterns and provide Verizon with recommendations about the best vehicle and technology options for improved fuel economy, cost savings, and greenhouse gas emissions reductions.

The National Clean Fleets Partnership builds on existing successes by local Clean Cities coalitions and the partner companies. In May 2011, Ryder celebrated the opening of its first natural gas maintenance facility in Rancho Dominguez, California. The event marked an important milestone in a project that will launch three natural gas facilities and two natural gas fueling stations and deploy 200 commercial natural gas vehicles. The company chose this alternative fuel because it offers its customers price predictability and cost and emissions savings.

“Ryder is extremely proud that we’re in a leadership position to bring these solutions to the marketplace at a time of need,” said Ryder Vice President of Sales Alex Mandrinkian.

Other existing initiatives by the National Clean Fleets Partners include the following:

- UPS maintains a fleet of more than 93,000 package cars, vans, and other vehicles. The company is reducing petroleum use and emissions through careful route planning, fuel-efficiency measures, and alternative fuel use. UPS has more than 2,500 compressed natural gas, liquefied natural gas, propane, electric, and hybrid electric vehicles. The company joined the partnership in April 2011.
- Enterprise Holdings, which includes Enterprise Rent-A-Car, Alamo Rent A Car, National Car Rental, and WeCar, operates more than 1 million cars and trucks. The company is investing in alternative fuels and making electric and hybrid cars available to rental customers. About 55 percent of its vehicles have highway fuel-economy ratings of at least 28 miles per gallon. The company joined the National Clean Fleets Partnership in June 2011.
- In 2004, FedEx placed into regular service its first hybrid electric delivery trucks, which improved fuel economy by 42 percent, and reduced greenhouse gas emissions by 25 percent, relative to its conventional trucks. By 2011, the company operated more than 400 advanced electric and hybrid-electric vehicles. In addition, FedEx operates vehicles running on biodiesel, propane, and natural gas. FedEx joined the partnership in April 2011. See <http://environment.fedex.com> for more information.
- GE plans to purchase 25,000 electric vehicles worldwide by 2015 for use as company cars and for lease to corporate customers through its Fleet Services business. In September 2011, the company broke ground on a customer learning center that will help GE commercial customers evaluate EVs and other alternative fuel vehicles for their fleets. GE joined the National Clean Fleets Partnership in June 2011.
- OSRAM SYLVANIA aims to replace 10 to 12 percent of its SYLVANIA Lighting Services fleet with more energy-efficient vehicles on an annual basis. In 2011, the lighting manufacturer replaced more than one-fifth of its lighting maintenance utility trucks with more efficient trucks that reduce the need for idling. OSRAM SYLVANIA joined the National Clean Fleets Partnership in June 2011.
- PepsiCo conserves fuel and reduces emissions by using EPA SmartWay-certified carriers for 100 percent of its U.S. transportation needs. The company also maximizes fuel efficiency through

improved route planning, idle reduction, speed governance, and preventive maintenance. PepsiCo has more than 1,300 hybrids in its car fleet and is the parent company of Frito-Lay, which deployed 176 all-electric delivery trucks in 2011. PepsiCo joined the National Clean Fleets Partnership in April 2011.

- Staples has increased the fuel efficiency of its fleet by more than 20 percent since 2007 through fuel-saving strategies like automatic idle reduction, speed controls, and advanced driver training. The measures yield annual fuel savings of nearly 3 million gallons. In 2011, Staples started operating 53 all-electric delivery trucks in Ohio, Missouri, Oregon, Texas, Georgia, and California. The company joined the partnership in June 2011.

The National Clean Fleets Partnership is part of the U.S. Department of Energy's Clean Cities program, which works to reduce petroleum use in the transportation sector by helping to accelerate the adoption of alternative fuels and advanced vehicle technologies and smarter, more fuel efficient driving practices.