

Conversion to dual fuels can mean savings

A program that helps save money and trains students — that's one of many reasons why Hocking Technical College in Nelsonville, Ohio, remains a stable institution.

The two-year college is moving toward energy self-sufficiency through vehicle conversion to dual fuels—traditional gasoline and natural gas. The program also serves as a student training program. At Hocking Tech, a student learns and produces.

The school's vehicle fleet is undergoing natural gas conversion, taking advantage of the school's abundant supply. Hocking Tech draws from nine producing wells located on the college's 250 acres.

(Students are also trained in oil-well drilling and production on both rotary and cable tool rigs, while at the same time providing natural gas.)

The converted vehicles include those driven by admissions counselors visiting high schools throughout the state and buses transporting students to campus.

Hocking Tech president Dr. John J. Light drives a vehicle sporting a "powered by natural gas" sticker in the back window.

The conversion doesn't stop there. A truck and sprayer have recently been converted to natural gas. Both were a gift from the Davey Tree Company of Kent, Ohio (February, 1986, WT&T).

Hugh Morton, director of the Institute for Forest Industries Training at Hocking Tech, says that conversion is especially important.

"The truck and sprayer are used in



Tanks for storing natural gas are installed as a part of the conversion to dual fuel operation by participants in a seminar on natural gas conversion at Hocking Technical College in Nelsonville, Ohio.

residential areas and the engine is left running while the spraying is being done," he says. "Natural gas is clean burning and will emit far less pollutants in the air."

Students attending the publicly-funded college can obtain a degree in tree care and timber harvesting, that includes an intensive 11-week program in tree care.

Clean burning is just one advantage of natural gas, says Jerry Hutton, director of the automotive and oil well drilling and production programs.

"The alternate fuel has an outstanding ability to start in cold weather and

because the ignition temperature is 300 degrees higher than gasoline, it's safer. Because it's lighter than air it rises into the atmosphere," says Hutton.

Longer engine life is also a feature of natural gas conversion.

Hutton says the cost of converting the truck and sprayer was \$2,300.

He notes a fleet of five vehicles can make conversion cost-efficient.

The process is gaining support not only for those seeking energy self-sufficiency but for larger fleet owners such as international airports and taxi delivery companies throughout the U.S. and Canada.



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