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## Companies cooking up ways to make fleets eco-friendly

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Monday, November 03, 2008

Bill Brennan, president of Riteway Recycling in Hobe Sound, couldn't be happier about using a recycled vegetable oil fuel known as "Viesel" in his company's recycling equipment and trucks.

"It closes a loop. We are into conserving resources for future generations," said Brennan, who said the 1,500 gallons a week of Viesel the company purchases has cut its costs by 30 percent. "When you recycle, you're saving money. Viesel proves that.



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"The only problem for me is that as it burns through the engine, there is a residual aroma," he quickly added. "I am continually hungry. It smells like French fries,."

Tantalizing aromas aside, Stuart Lamb said his company, Cooke's Environmental Services in Stuart, is producing 3,000 to 4,000 gallons a week of the biofuel. That's "oversold by 300 to 400 percent."

But Lamb doesn't just sell Viesel. His septic tank company, which opened a commercial plant to recycle and refine used cooking oil, fuels more than a dozen of its own trucks and numerous pieces of equipment with it.

"It's in its infancy," Lamb said of the venture that has attracted both the Martin County School Board, which is trying out Viesel in one of its buses, and the city of Stuart, which is using it in two garbage trucks. It's also attracting private companies.

Cooke's Viesel fuel - aimed at saving money, helping the environment and displacing foreign fuel - is perhaps the most innovative way South Florida companies are greening their fleets. And more and more are fueling their trucks with a blend of diesel and biodiesel fuels.

But many companies are also adding hybrid-electric vehicles to their fleets, with those same goals in mind.



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In September, Atlanta-based Coca-Cola Enterprises Inc. introduced 10 heavy-duty hybrid-electric trucks to its South Florida fleet - which covers Fort Pierce to the Keys, spokesman Norman Ross said. The trucks are estimated to improve fuel efficiency by 32 percent, reduce emissions by 37 percent and create less noise when idling in traffic.

Florida Power & Light Co., a unit of Juno Beach-based FPL Group Inc., is also a leader among companies introducing hybrid to their fleets.

According to spokeswoman Sharon Bennett, the giant utility has "doubled the size of our hybrid fleet each year for the past three years."

She said FPL's hybrid fleet, part of its roughly 2,900 vehicles, includes 40 Toyota Priuses, 43 Ford Escapes, 10 Toyota Highlanders and 12 utility bucket trucks, with more on order.

By year's end, the program will have saved 120,000 gallons of fuel and \$500,000 in fuel-related costs, Bennett said.

Raising the bar, Fort Lauderdale-based eco-friendly Pizza Fusion, has an all-hybrid fleet.

The eco-friendly chain has eight locations nationwide - including restaurants in Wellington and Palm Beach Gardens. Each location has three or four hybrids for deliveries, said company spokesman Eric Haley.

The newest store in North Miami, scheduled to open this month, will run its pizzas to customers in Smart cars.

"It's a smaller car. It weighs less. It's more fuel efficient," Haley said. "We mandate eco-friendly transportation for all our stores, whether it is a hybrid or conducive to bicycles or electric scooters."

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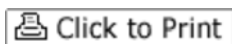
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