

Emory University Bus Fleet: 100% Alternatively Fueled

Thanks to the idea and persistence of 2006 graduate Erik Fyfe, ACORE member institution Emory University is using biofuel made from raw materials cooked up in the fry vats of local restaurants — and the University's own kitchens — to fuel much of Emory's bus fleet. There's little worry about a fuel shortage: Emory dining services alone produce about 5,500 gallons of used oil every month.

The new biodiesel program is based on Fyfe's senior honors thesis. His research analyzed the potential for a community-based biodiesel production program using a model developed by the Southern Alliance for Clean Energy (SACE).



2006 Emory University Graduate, Erik Fyfe

“Cliff” — Emory University's shuttle bus network which provides transportation alternatives for students, workers and members of the Atlanta-area community — is using a new fuel — one that's renewable, environmentally friendly and readily available. It's biodiesel, and it's being made from waste cooking oil gathered from Emory's kitchens.

Last month, with the introduction of the new fuel, Emory reached a milestone in its effort to reduce the amount of fossil fuel it uses. Of the 58 Cliff shuttles, 24 are using a biodiesel blend. The remainder of the fleet is fueled by either compressed natural gas or electricity: *Emory's bus fleet is now 100 percent alternatively fueled.*

The diesel shuttles currently use a “B5” biodiesel blend — 5 percent biodiesel and 95 percent diesel derived from petroleum. Emory plans to increase the blend to B20 — 20 percent biodiesel — in the next several months, and ultimately has plans to use 100 percent biodiesel.

Biodiesel and raw cooking oil, however, are not the same, even though biodiesel is derived from cooking oil. Restaurants pay to have waste oil removed from their kitchens, putting an economic drain on the business. With biodiesel conversion, restaurants no longer pay to have the oil removed and may even be able to sell oil byproducts.

“The biodiesel program fits squarely within Emory's goals for sustainability,” said Ciannat Howett, director of sustainability initiatives. “Emory is seeking ways to reduce waste, lower air pollution emissions, and improve energy efficiency in order to preserve a high quality of life for ourselves and future generations.” Learn more at www.ridecliff.org.

