

Dane County: Marks Earth Week with 100th vehicle that runs on renewable fuel

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Today, County Executive Joe Parisi joined staff at the East District Campus renewable natural gas (RNG) filling station to highlight Dane County acquiring its 100th vehicle that runs on renewable vehicle fuel. The announcement comes as Dane County celebrates Earth Week and recognizes the investments it has made over the last decade to transition to alternative fuels. By growing its green energy fleet to more than 115 vehicles, Dane County is saving taxpayer dollars and reducing carbon emissions during an unprecedented time in the oil industry, as gas and diesel prices have soared.

“Dane County is a national leader in renewable energy and sustainability efforts, and we are excited to mark this Earth Week by celebrating the acquisition of our 100th vehicle that runs on renewable vehicle fuel,” said Dane County Executive Joe Parisi. “By investing in clean fuel infrastructure, Dane County is leading the way on what is possible in the public and private sectors to help combat climate change and be part of the solution.”

Dane County currently owns 100 RNG and RNG/gas hybrid vehicles, 3 electric vehicles, and 13 hybrid electric vehicles. The County saved \$139,288 in 2021 by using compressed natural gas (CNG) and RNG, instead of diesel in its vehicles. If diesel prices remain in the \$4.50 range, Dane County will save more than \$350,000 this year.

Altogether, Dane County’s green energy fleet used 136,000 gallons of CNG and RNG last year. County vehicles used 250,000 gallons of diesel and 285,000 gallons of unleaded gasoline – meaning 20% of the fuel consumed was CNG and RNG overall.

The department with the greatest fuel consumption is the Dane County Highway Department, and almost one third of Highway Department fuel consumption is RNG or CNG.

This conversion to alternative fuels was in part spurred by surging gas prices back in 2012. County Executive Parisi made it a priority to transition RNG vehicles into the county's fleet whenever possible. At the time, Dane County owned 16 RNG vehicles and had plans to increase the RNG fleet to as many as 30 vehicles by the end of that year.

County Executive Parisi's 2022 budget allocates over \$5 million for the purchase of RNG trailers to help fuel up the Dane County highway fleet in areas of the county where RNG filling stations are less available. Parisi also included nearly \$2 million for installation of a new RNG filling station at the Fish Hatchery Road Highway garage and \$3.2 million for the purchase of eight more RNG powered snowplows. All told, this more than \$10 million investment in clean fuel infrastructure will further reduce Dane County's reliance on diesel and expand the reach of renewables into more rural parts of the county. This will make Dane County's fleet of plows more efficient, both in their energy consumption and reduced time needed for refueling.

In 2018, the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (PSC) awarded Dane County a \$450,000 Energy Innovation Grant to increase the capacity of its RNG filling station at the East District Campus. Dane County's project was selected by the PSC because it brought about positive changes to energy consumption, increased use of renewable energy and transportation technologies, comprehensive energy planning, and bolstered preparedness and resiliency in energy systems. Since its completion, the larger station has allowed Dane County to fuel RNG vehicles more quickly and has provided a level of certainty on fueling prices.

Dane County's RNG facility at the landfill is on track for a record year of clean burning fuel production and revenue generation. The facility that converts methane gas from the landfill into renewable compressed natural gas for vehicle fuel is projected to displace 3,250,000 gallons of gasoline this year, reducing emissions equivalent to traveling 72 million miles less on the road. The impact on carbon emission reductions is the same as planting 475,000 trees.

Additionally, Dane County's RNG facility has an offload station, which provides area manure digesters with the ability to get their gas into the RNG market. This has allowed local digesters to continue to operate and expand, resulting in better

manure management, local jobs, clean fuel production, and cleaner lakes. Thanks to a growing number of digesters using the offload station, the amount of gas delivered by area digesters is expected to grow by 150% this year. Total digester gas delivered is projected to displace 2,000,000 gallons of gasoline this year. That is enough fuel for a passenger vehicle to drive around the equator 2,500 times.