Four Heating Oil Providers Now Offer Biodiesel

by Bend Weekly News Sources

Heating oil customers in the Portland metropolitan area now have an easy time choosing Oregon-made biodiesel blends to keep their homes warm. Deluxe Fuel, First Call Heating & Cooling, and Priestley & Sons Oil recently joined Star-Oilco in offering regular heating oil blended with 20 percent biodiesel. The biodiesel is made from waste cooking oils at SeQuential Pacificâ€™s Salem biodiesel plant.â€œBiodiesel is becoming mainstream because our customers want it. Thereâ€™s something very personal and accessible about heating your home with a cleaner, locally-produced fuel that contributes directly to Oregonâ€™s economy,â€• said Mark Fitz of Star-Oilco.The Oregon Environmental Council (OEC) has been working with the Oregon Petroleum Association (OPA) to promote greater use of biodiesel by heating oil companies. At a workshop held by OPA and OEC in February, heating oil distributors learned what they needed to know to begin offering biodiesel blends and became intrigued by the potential to increase market share by capturing â€œgreenâ€• consumers.â€œThe industry has been very open to learning about biodiesel. They see it as a business opportunity, as well as a chance to do the right thing for the environment,â€• said Kathy Hyzy, project manager for OEC.â€œBiodiesel is the best news the heating oil industry has had in a long time,â€• said Molly Brady, president of First Call Heating & Cooling. The cleaner-burning blend of regular heating oil and biodiesel is an increasingly popular way to keep warm in Portland. â€œWe really like that biodiesel is a cleaner-burning, locally-produced heating fuel,â€• said Ryan Deibert. He and his wife Lorelei Juntunen heat their home in St. Johnâ€™s with a biodiesel blend purchased from Star-Oilco. They did not have to make any modifications to their heating system to switch to the fuel.According to Deibert, the biodiesel blend has kept their house just as warm as regular heating oil. And while they do pay a little more per gallon - on average, approximately twenty cents â€“ Deibert says the benefits are well worth it. â€œWe figure that it costs us a little less than $5.00 more per month versus regular heating oil, and knowing that every bit of that extra goes back to the local economy, it just makes more sense,â€• commented Deibert.According to testing by the federal government, burning B20 (20% biodiesel; 80% petroleum diesel) reduces emissions of carcinogenic hydrocarbons by 30%, particulates by up to 20%, and sulfur by 20%. Pollution from burning regular heating oil, which is the same as diesel, is linked to health hazards ranging from asthma to cancer and heart problems. Reductions from local sources of air pollution can make a significant difference in the health of children, the elderly, and those with respiratory illnesses in the community. For more information about biodiesel heating oil, visit www.biofuels4oregon.org/users/heatingoil. or www.sqbiofuels.com.