



People and Nature: Our Future is in the Balance

National Wildlife Federation®

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Ball State University Muncie, Indiana Spring 2004, Transportation

BACKGROUND

Campus Profile

Ball State University (BSU), situated on 940 acres in Muncie, Indiana, serves approximately 19,000 students (45 percent male, 55 percent female). Seven academic colleges offer 120 undergraduate programs, 80 master's programs and 20 doctoral programs in 46 departments and schools. Some 750 faculty, 550 professional staff and 1,500 support personnel compose the employee base.

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GOALS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Goals

Establish the routine use of biodiesel fuel amendments in the campus bus/shuttle fleet.

Accomplishments

A biodiesel fuel mix (B-20) has been used to fuel the shuttle fleet - and all other mobile diesel equipment - this academic year.

Challenges and Responses

The primary challenge encountered in this initiative was mainly the absorption of the added cost for the biodiesel fuel. The Facilities Planning and Management team, under the leadership of the Associate Vice President, has latitude to manage its budgeted line items internally and was able this year to set aside sufficient dollars to cover the added cost of the B-20 biodiesel fuel mix. In part, the justification for such added expense is made by considering the effective reduction on engine wear.

As a long-term benefit, the fuel has an increased lubricity, which means that engine wear is reduced and the life of the vehicle is extended, thus reducing capital replacement cost. Although, generally the university operates on a three-year cycle for replacement of its vehicle fleet, which is used largely by faculty and staff attending professional meetings, the diesel equipment fleet typically lasts longer. The equipment is cycled out of use only after it is determined that the repair and maintenance costs begin to exceed the benchmarks of established overhead. By using the B-20 biodiesel fuel mix, the reduction in engine wear, and associated reduction in capital

replacement cost can be prorated over a longer period of time, thus allowing this budget line to recoup its operational expense against the savings made in the capital expense column.

ENGAGEMENT AND SUPPORT

Leaders and Supporters

This work was undertaken at the initiative of the Associate Vice President for Facilities Planning and Management.

Funding

The added cost of the biodiesel fuel was absorbed in the operational budget of Facilities Planning and Management. As mentioned above, this is offset by the reduction in capital expense necessitated by cycling off diesel vehicles prematurely.

National Wildlife Federation's Campus Ecology® Program

Although we did not use specific resources from the National Wildlife Federation's Campus Ecology program, we added leverage by maintaining a membership in Campus Ecology, interacting routinely with members of the staff at Campus Ecology, and anticipating the opportunity to establish this as a goal for the year and to submit it to the Campus Ecology program as a final yearbook entry.

CLOSING COMMENT

The success of any green initiative is measured in large part by its transparency and effect on the more general campus community; we are continuing to share this initiative in public presentations and through the membership of the BSU Council on the Environment. In addition to a presentation by the Associate Vice President at the monthly meeting of the BSU Council on the Environment, news articles were developed in the campus newspaper, and members of the Council on the Environment, who represent every constituency on campus (from student organizations, through the Office of the President) were in turn asked to share this information with their constituent groups. This campus grapevine communication technique has worked well to spirit conversation about such initiatives throughout the campus community.