

ARCC partners with bio-fuels local company | ABC Newspapers

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by Peter Bodley

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Used cooking oil generated by Anoka-Ramsey Community College is now being recycled into biodiesel fuel.



Ever Cat Fuel picked up its first delivery of used cooking oil from Anoka-Ramsey Community College last month for conversion into biodiesel fuel. Left to right: Roger Freeman, Anoka-Ramsey facilities director; Ben Harris, Ever Cat Fuels sales and procurement manager; Jacob Steffen, Ever Cat Fuels; and Melanie Waite-Altringer, Anoka-Ramsey biology faculty member.

The college has partnered with Ever Cat Fuels LLC, whose headquarters is in Anoka and has a bio-fuels plant in Isanti, on the project with the first barrel of used cooking oil from Anoka-Ramsey being

siphoned into an Ever Cat Fuels truck last month.

Roger Freeman, facilities director at Anoka-Ramsey, set up the partnership to send the used cooking oil generated by the college to Ever Cat Fuels' Isanti plant.

According to Ben Harris, Ever Cat Fuels sales and procurement manager, the company acquires used cooking oil from a number of locations, notably area restaurants.

He expects an Ever Cat Fuels truck to stop by Anoka-Ramsey's Coon Rapids campus every five or six weeks to pick up the used oil, Harris said.

"We pay for the used oil we take," he said.

Ever Cat Fuels uses innovative and greener methods of converting biomass into biodiesel fuel, Harris said.

Indeed, the company is projecting a growth of up to 2,000 jobs over the next five years because of government incentives to boost demand for bio-fuels and the expansion of the bio-fuels industry, he said.

However, the incentive to increase the percentage of bio-fuels in diesel fuel sold at gas stations from 5 to 10 percent, which is scheduled to go into effect in May 2012, is likely to be put off until 2013, Harris said.

Ever Cat uses a patented, one-step continuous process called the "McGyan process" that converts used oils to fuel in seconds and is environmentally friendly.

Its current capacity at its Isanti plant is three million gallons, but "we are looking to expand in 24 months," Harris said.

According to Melanie Waite-Altringer, Anoka-Ramsey biology faculty member, the college has developed a unique partnership with Ever Cat Fuels not only to provide it with used cooking oil for

its product.

In the 2010-2011 academic year, the college responded to Ever Cat Fuel's immediate employment needs by training veterans, displaced workers and incumbent employees through customized education, Waite-Altringer said.

"Now faculty at Anoka-Ramsey are interested in building on the customized education model to include teaching and contextualized learning efforts that teach students about the multi-faceted bio-fuels industry, as well as teach them skills that can be applied in the bio-fuels industry," she said.

In addition, the partnership involves Ever Cat Fuels planting an energy crop of Pennycress and eventually Camelina in a 10-acre demonstration plot of land at Anoka-Ramsey's Cambridge campus, according to Mary Jacobson, Anoka-Ramsey director of marketing and public relations.

"Both plants are 'weeds' that have a high oil content in their seeds, which can be converted into biodiesel fuel," Jacobson said.

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