

Be The "Envy" Of Your Neighborhood And Lower Your Fuel

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By Yvonne Volante

Have you heard about the ENV yet? It's pronounced like "envy" and stands for Emissions Energy Vehicle.

After many years of testing, Intelligent Energy of London has developed a motorcycle-like vehicle that shows lots of promise. The ENV was introduced in early 2006 and has shown great promise by being embraced by the public.

The technology used in this vehicle is a fuel cell. For the technology-minded, it uses a proton exchange membrane fuel cell. The cell converts hydrogen and oxygen to generate electricity. In short, the fuel cell takes the protons and electrons from the hydrogen atom and this forms an electric current.

This electricity is then fed to a series of batteries which powers an electric motor. This gives the bike its power to run. The only noise emitted is from a cooling fan.

For the technology-minded, there is some fascinating usage of greatly available resources (hydrogen is the most abundant element). For many of us, though, all we are interested in is: does it work?

In short, the answer is a resounding yes.

The motorcycle will top out at about 50 miles an hour. True, not freeway speeds, but not everyone has a need to travel at high speeds. And it will run for up to 100 miles or about four hours between fill-ups.

Now this is still a long way from giving many of us all the benefits of our gas-guzzlers. But, it's a terrific start. After all, if this technology is available for a motorcycle, how far behind is the ability to power the SUV?

Another nice advantage to the ENV technology is the quiet operation. A nice quiet ride through the countryside can be just that: quiet. And, who's going to miss the smelly emissions we get from our gas and diesel engines?

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The cost for being the "envy" of your neighborhood? Intelligent Energy says that it will sell the bike for somewhere between \$6,000 and \$8,000 (US).

Maybe these high fuel costs are going to result in something positive after all.

Yvonne Volante, the author, is facinated by what is possible by utilizing technology. She operates

<http://www.fuelez.com>

, a site devoted to fuel and fuel issues. Please visti

<http://www.fuelez.com>

soon.

Flex Fuel Vehicle And Ethanol

By Simon Oldmann

Flexible fuel vehicles are just like an average car in the sense that they use a single gas tank. But it can run on a mixture of gasoline and alcohol based fuel. Any car made after 1988 can run on a mixture of 10% ethanol and 90% gasoline. A flexible fuel vehicle can run on a mixture of up to 85% ethanol. Modifications are needed for this ratio as alcohol based fuels are corrosive.

Fuel tanks and engines must be modified in flexible fuel vehicles. In the US, there is a special indicator used that analyzes the ratio of the mix and adjusts itself accordingly to make sure that the fuel is burned clean. This is done by adjusting the timing and the fuel injection and happens automatically. Many flexible fuel vehicles are also required to use a special engine oil.

Why use ethanol?

Ethanol offers motorists an environmentally friendly alternative to using fossil based gasoline fuels, since ethanol is much more environmentally friendly and a renewable resource it seems to be an ideal alternative fuel for an environmentally friendly motorist. Studies show that using a mix of 10% ethanol reduces carbon monoxide levels by up to 17% , CO2 emissions by 4.2% and hydrogen emissions by up to 5%. By using a mixture of 85% ethanol greenhouse gas effects are reduced by up to 37%

What countries are using ethanol fuel?

There are three countries currently using ethanol in their vehicles – US, Brazil and Sweden.

* Brazil has been using ethanol mixtures in their fuel since the 1970's and it is required by law that all fuel mixes be at a ratio of 29–25% ethanol.

* Sweden is the only country that has flexible fuel vehicles in Europe, although there are plans to

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introduce fuel mixes of up to 85% in other European countries.

* US has many cars designed to run on 85% ethanol fuel mixes. These flexible fuel cars make up 4 million of the cars in the US, although less than 1% of these vehicles are currently running on a mixture of 85% ethanol.

The future of ethanol based fuels

At the moment the future of ethanol fuel mixtures seems a little bleak. Until the fuel companies can make the mixtures of gasoline and ethanol fuel mixes more efficient and provide a superior mileage, people will still continue using gasoline and small mixes of ethanol such as a 10% ratio. Once this obstacle has been corrected, ethanol will be more widely used in flexible fuel vehicles.

There is potential for future growth in the ethanol industry. Last year an energy bill was created that is calling for refiners to begin using more renewable fuels. The national ethanol industry currently produces more than 4 billion gallons of ethanol fuel per year with more plants being built all the time. The ethanol industry is definitely set to sky-rocket in coming years.

Simon Oldmann is an avid writer and a green activist, he has been writing about Ethanol use since the growing popularity of Ethanol these days, Simon writes for

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