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Biodiesel for sale in Snohomish

Cenex is the first commercial operation in Snohomish County to sell the fuel.

By Yoshiaki Nohara / Herald Writer

SNOHOMISH - The first commercial biodiesel operation in Snohomish County has begun humbly with two pumps. Snohomish Cenex started selling the alternative fuel, made of vegetable oil crushed from seeds and mixed with petroleum diesel, in February in response to requests from several customers, the co-op's general manager Ed Eldredge said Monday.

Don Kusler of Snohomish was among those customers. Kusler said biodiesel is a cleaner fuel than gasoline and would reduce U.S. dependency on foreign oil. "I'm delighted. They are ahead of the curve," Kusler said Monday of Cenex.

Cenex is at 168 Lincoln Ave. in Snohomish and buys biodiesel from Whole Energy of Bellingham. Biodiesel is more expensive than regular diesel. But the store sells both for the same price of \$2.93 per gallon. "It's an intro to get business going," Eldredge said. The experiment is picking up business, Eldredge said. The store sells about 1,000 gallons of biodiesel per week. It also hands out brochures about biodiesel to customers.

Cenex runs the first commercial operation of biodiesel in the county. One distributor experimented with selling biodiesel at the Mukilteo farmer's market in 2005. Biodiesel has drawn attention and support from state officials, who think it could be generated from canola seeds grown in Washington. A result, they believe, could revive struggling agriculture statewide.

This legislative session, lawmakers drummed up support for biodiesel. Gov. Chris Gregoire supported a fledgling biofuel industry and discussed how to have the state pay for equipment while guaranteeing a market for producers of biodiesel and ethanol. The budget pledges \$25 million for the effort.

"It's a wave of the future, Kusler said Eldredge said some customers are hesitant to switch to biodiesel, but it's a matter of education. "It's going well for us," he said.

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