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Kwon Huh of the Edmonds Public Works Department fuels up a city truck Thursday with B-20 biodiesel.

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## Edmonds buys into biodiesel

City switches 35 vehicles to B-20 blend with no hitches

By [Bill Sheets](#) / Herald Writer

EDMONDS - When President Bush in his State of the Union address last week laid out a plan to reduce gasoline consumption by 20 percent over the next 10 years, Edmonds was already well on its way to that goal.

At the beginning of January, the city began using 20 percent biodiesel fuel in most of its city diesel vehicles. The change was part of the city's participation in an agreement by the U.S. Council of Mayors to reduce global warming.

The move isn't costing the city a great deal more, public works director Noel Miller said.

"With fuel prices going up, they've kind of caught up with the biodiesel," Miller said.

The city is buying B-20 biodiesel through a government contract from Associated Petroleum Products of Seattle for \$2.65 per gallon, and regular diesel for \$2.33, city fleet manager Dave Sittauer said.

At the city, the B-20 is being used in the city's public works, parks maintenance and fire trucks, a total of 35 vehicles.

It's not being used in the city's four ambulances, Sittauer said. When an engine that's been running regular diesel begins using biodiesel, the vegetable-oil based fuel can shake loose residue, which can clog filters, he said. The filters in the ambulances are particularly

susceptible to this, Sittauer said.

"We just can't afford to have one of those trucks die," he said.

When the city buys three new ambulances over the next few years, it will use the biodiesel mix in them because their engines will be clean and won't plug, Sittauer said.

So far, the new fuel mixture has worked well in the city's vehicles, Sittauer said. To test the fuel to make sure it wouldn't gel in colder weather, employees set a sample outside overnight, Sittauer said.

"We didn't have any problem that way," he said.

Pure biodiesel can thicken and stop flowing at freezing temperatures.

The city isn't using pure biodiesel because most engine warranties don't cover it, and because there are no industry standards yet for quality, Sittauer said.

A B-20 fuel mix reduces pollutants between 2 and 50 percent, depending on the engine type, according to the National Biodiesel Board.

Whole Energy Fuels of Bellingham sells biodiesel around the state, including to Associated Petroleum Products, which in turn distributes the fuel to government agencies that have made the switch.

Associated Petroleum Products brings the fuel to Edmonds' public works building at 7110 210th St. SW, where it fills up the city's 6,000-gallon tank.

Last year, Mayor Gary Haakenson signed onto the U.S. Mayor's Climate Protection Agreement to reduce greenhouse gases.

Haakenson formed a panel of residents and city staffers who came up with 21 recommendations for energy conversion and conservation measures.

In addition to using biodiesel, the city has taken several other steps such as using newer, energy-efficient lighting and heating units in city buildings; replacing traffic signal lamps with light-emitting diodes that use less electricity; and encouraging residents to switch out their regular light bulbs for energy-efficient fluorescent bulbs.

"There's a lot of little things we can do," Haakenson said.

Other goals the city has set include encouraging transportation alternatives and environmentally friendly land-use practices.

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