

**Centralina Clean Fuels Coalition-Core Planning Group
Centralina Council of Governments**

Friday, December 10, 2004

In Attendance:

Craven Hudson

QNRC and Gaston County Cooperative Extension

Mike Keziah

City of Monroe

Daniel Nuckolls

City of Concord

Gail Thomas

UNCC

Darryl Parker

Parker Media

“Coach” Joe White

CMS

Michael Williams

GSA

Staff Present: Nadine Bennett, Jason Wager

Meeting began at 10:10.

Introductions were made around the room. The core stakeholders group has not met since earlier in the year, and there were a few “new” faces.

“Coach” Joe White is the chair of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg school board, as well as the chair of the CCFC.

Mike Keziah is with the City of Monroe. The City recently made the switch to biodiesel.

Darryl Parker is with Parker Media. Darryl built the current CCFC web site.

Daniel Nuckolls is with the City of Concord

Michael Williams is with GSA. He commented that they’ve got the AFVs, they just need the infrastructure.

Gail Thomas is with UNCC.

Craven Hudson is taking the place of David Fogarty and is representing Gaston County Cooperative Extension and QNRC.

Jason explained that a great deal of work went into achieving designation and then the designation event itself. However, our task now is to start implementing our goals and objectives. However, those goals and objectives are old. Jason went through them to give the group an update on work that has been going on in the past months and also while we were trying to achieve designation. The following is the list of goals and objectives directly from the Program Plan with updates on a number of them:

- 1.1** Establish publicly available ethanol in the region. (This is a top priority for the coalition, as a number of fleets in the region have ethanol vehicles but no refueling station. The availability of ethanol would immediately increase the number of viable alternative fuel vehicles in the area.)
- a) Work with Duke Energy District Manager Joni Davis to explore opening their private ethanol fueling facility to a limited number of public fleets. *[We have spoken with Duke, and this will not happen, for a variety of reasons. They can not open their fueling to additional fleets.]*
 - b) Continue to pursue opportunities through the National Ethanol Vehicle Coalition. *[NEVC – they had obtained a big pot of money, which we thought they’d allocate to the states. They’re not going to do that. However, we want to look at grant money through NEVC for a station on South Blvd. This would be the first publicly available ethanol in the region.]*
 - c) Publicize ethanol available in South Carolina (outside of the CCFC area but still within the metropolitan area). South Carolina’s Palmetto Clean Fuels Coalition is currently using a portion of fines levied against Willamette Industries to develop ethanol refueling stations in the nine-county region. At this time, two vendors have agreed to install E-85 for the public. CCFC can build on this base to promote E-85 in the Charlotte region. *[We can continue to do this.]*
 - d) Work with United Energy to locate a viable Charlotte location for public ethanol. Although United Energy is not yet a stakeholder, they have been active in bringing biodiesel and ethanol to South Carolina and currently distribute fuel (petroleum) to a number of Charlotte area stations. Due to the proprietary nature of their contacts in the industry and the commercial station customers they serve, we are only able to state that we will focus our efforts in coordination with United Energy and any other interested parties on the location of 2 new publicly available ethanol fueling locations in our region. These stations would be located to serve fleets that have or will have large numbers of ethanol capable vehicles including the United States Postal Service, the City of Charlotte, NC Motor Fleet Management, and others. *[United Energy is now a stakeholder. A service station on South Blvd. has received a grant to begin selling ethanol.]*
 - e) Focus on obtaining grant money through the newly announced AFV Incentive program scheduled to be offered in the Spring 2004 (see “AFV Grants, Successes and Accomplishments”, subsection “e”) to achieve greater ethanol availability in the region. *[AFV incentive grant used for station above.]*
 - f) Work strategically and creatively with the US Postal Service to identify ways of refueling their vehicles with ethanol while respecting their internal fleet policies and procedures. *[Jason has had a meeting with a “high-level” postal official. He hopes to continue the contact.]*
- 1.2** Coordinate fuel providers, fleets and maintenance providers. A major impediment to AFVs identified by core stakeholders is the lack of coordination between fleets, fuel providers, and particularly maintenance providers. CCFC will seek to provide a connection among these groups.

- a) Fleet locations will be mapped digitally and made available on the Centralina Clean Fuels Coalition (CCFC) web site.
- b) Alternative fuel infrastructure locations will be mapped digitally and made available on the CCFC web site.
- c) Maintenance locations will be identified, mapped and made available on the CCFC web site.
- d) Create brochures for distribution to local government offices showing infrastructure and service locations.
- e) Identify and target fleets within a certain distance of current refueling stations.
- f) Identify fleets along corridors.

[This is all contingent on the mapping – we do not yet have open access to GIS. Hopefully, this will come soon. The Southeast Alternative Fuels Task Force has done some mapping. CCFC helped to make that possible by supplying information.]

1.3 The Charlotte area is at the crossroads of two major interstates – I-85 and I-77 – with I-40 just 40 miles to the north. We will partner with other states to support the development of Clean Corridors along these and other routes to allow alternative fuel vehicles to easily travel along or near major highways by assuring the availability of adequate fueling and recharging stations.

- a) Work with the Southeast Alternative Fuels Task Force to establish “clean corridors” throughout Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee. *[We continue to work with SEATF – recently provided them with stations so that they could do the mapping.]*
- b) Coordinate with the Triangle Clean Cities Coalition and the Palmetto State Clean Fuels Coalition. *[We will expand on this and begin working with the Solar Center as well, as they have a new alternative fuels position.]*
- c) Work to develop US 321 between Hickory, North Carolina and York, South Carolina as a model alternative fuels corridor building on current CNG presence in Gastonia, Hickory and York. *[We need to develop a new contact for the Gaston area, but this is still do-able. CNG has been a “difficult” fuel recently. e.g. Ford's departure from the market, reduced GM product offerings, rumors of sky high fuel prices and supply shortages, etc. Clean Cities is sponsoring a webcast on January 19 from 11 a.m. – 12 noon EST to discuss many of these issues. See www.4cleanfuels.com for details.]*

1.4 Work with school bus fleets to develop alternative fuel vehicles. Encourage the interim use of bio-diesel where propane or other alternative fuels are not available but interest exists.

a. Continue discussions with Charlotte/Mecklenburg County School System. Joe White (Chairman) began contact in December. Richard Laird (Manager of Transportation Services and Maintenance for the school system) attended the February Core Stakeholders meeting to share ideas/concerns. Follow-up from this point will include overcoming any barriers. *[Coach is now the chairman of CMS. We remain in contact with Rich Laird. He saw the propane school bus when it toured. School bus people at CMS have a lot on their plates already, but Coach wants them to start looking at AFVs.]*

Coach expects to see a policy in the coming years to be more environmentally conscious. Coach has stopped working from the bottom up – he’s moved to top down. Coalition will continue to provide information. The school is considering an anti-idling policy. Will the school consider blended fuels? Coach says that they come up with every excuse in the world to not use biodiesel. They’re working on ULSD now. Bottom line –they haven’t done nearly as much as they could do. Joe Estridge and Kenny Boggs – maintenance people – are looking at biodiesel. They are also looking at grants. Would the PTA be able to help with things like anti-idling policy? After all, their children are breathing that air. However, parents have other concerns, too – like their kids comfort on the bus. Maybe it would be better to go with blends, since that wouldn’t impact the kids. However, we still need all of the grassroots support we can get. We had a propane bus come through in April – the CMS folks were impressed, but the chassis didn’t meet state specs. The bus was built by Corbeil. If they could take that engine and put it on a different chassis – and get some mobile fueling, CMS could do it].

- b) Work with NC Purchasing and Contracting and Department of Public Instruction to place alternative fuel school buses on the approved purchasing list and to make sure that the fuels are on the contract list (Mike Keziah and David Friday)
- c) Arrange an event to promote the new dedicated Propane school bus made by GM and Corbeil. The bus is will be touring the U.S. in 2004 and is sponsored by the Propane industry. The contact for this tour is April Fetzik at AR & Company in San Luis Obispo, CA. *[Event arranged in April.]*

1.5 Hold advancing the choice event. Coordinate with York Technical College on AFV Day Odyssey. Participate in planning activities to ensure strong North Carolina representation. *[Accomplished. However, we need to strongly consider how we’re involve in the event in the future. We put a lot of energy into the meeting and are not sure if the returns were good enough. We definitely want to be involved in Odyssey Day in the future, but maybe we should also have a focused AFV fair. Jason has been discussing this with David Friday – specifically for the City of Charlotte, but it could be opened to the public. Mike Keziah also mentioned that fleet purchasers have a “summer show” – they’ve had various groups bring in vehicles. Maybe the coalitions should do some work there – all fleet purchasers in the region are represented. We need to get in front of the people who will spend the money.]*

1.6 Continue working with David Henry of Ford Motor Company to obtain a list of FFVs in the region. Information would include purchaser by county over the past four years by fuel. This list would establish that a market exists in the Charlotte area and would specify where this market is, showing a need for ethanol stations in the area. *[We will need to work with local dealers instead.]*

1.7 Work with NC State agencies with fleets in the Coalition area to encourage the acquisition and utilization of alternative fuel vehicles.

- a) NC Motor Fleet Management decision makers have indicated that they would be strongly supportive of purchasing ethanol for their fleet vehicles in this region if

the fuel were available at a commercial station. To this end, they have indicated that they would re-locate as many E-85 capable vehicles as possible to this region and require, where feasible, that drivers of those vehicles fuel with ethanol. *[Old contact retired, new person is not accessible. They have flex fuel vehicles around the state, so eventually we should be able to get them more interested. Ethanol may soon be available to the fleet at South Boulevard.]*

1.8 Provide technical support and experience available from stakeholders.

- a) Draw on the following stakeholders: Duke Energy, UNCC (Gail Thomas), Ed White (Alternative Fuels Solutions) and Wendy Bell (Palmetto State Clean Fuels Coalition)
- b) Work with York Technical College to expand and offer training programs on AFV maintenance. Bob Kosak is able to provide course work on CNG, LPG and electric. Four full days of training can be tailored to meet specific needs.

1.9 Continually update the database of alternative fuel vehicles in the region. *[We continue to do this.]*

1.10 Work with Charlotte Douglas International airport to promote greater AFV use in and around the airport facility.

- a) Work with Brian Hennessey (airport contact) to encourage related industries (e.g., car rental companies, taxi and shuttle companies, etc.) to use the airport's currently underutilized CNG fueling station. *[Have maintained contact with Brian Hennessey and alerted him to various grant opportunities.]*
- b) Work with Joe White and Jerry Orr, Airport Director, to establish a memorandum of agreement between the airport and the State and County for Emission Reduction Credits (ERCs). This memorandum would be similar to that between Raleigh-Durham Airport and the North Carolina Division of Air Quality. These ERCs would recognize voluntary emission reductions and can be credited for future use.

1.11 Work with local marketers to construct fueling infrastructure for fleets that will use propane. *[Steve Terry UNCC has brought a lot of interest in alt fuels to UNCC – he's looking at getting into propane. Trying to work on sustainability standards for the campus. Hoping to get graduate student assistants to help with this. UNCC is also requesting a flex fuel vehicle (ethanol), but they will have no place to fuel it.]*

1.12 Mecklenburg County Program Intentions

At the current time, Mecklenburg County has not identified a funding source to purchase additional alternative fuel vehicles or build alternative fuel

infrastructure. The Charlotte Mecklenburg School System currently operates eight natural gas school buses and a fueling facility. The County is committed to the wise use of resources, including fuel, and is committed to achieving emission reductions from mobile sources. We anticipate our commitments to this program through 2009 will include activities like use of hybrid vehicles, consideration of fuel economy in fleets, and idle reduction programs.

- 1.13** The City of Charlotte uses Fuelman cards and Carolina Petroleum for approximately 4,000 pieces of motorized equipment, 2,000 of which are on-road. Investigate ways to get them to use alternative fuels. Make sure that there are alternative fuels on the networks (in locations that make sense). Work with City of Charlotte in crafting and implementing an action plan for alternative fuels. *[City now has an action plan. We will be working with them on a “mini Odyssey Day.” They’re also looking at doing a 10,000-gallon biodiesel test by the end of the year.]*
- 1.14** Work with Ed White and the Charlotte Area Transportation System (CATS) to coordinate a demonstration project for propane electric hybrid special assistance shuttles. *[This is not a priority for CATS or for Ed. CATS is doing a lot, but the focus is different.]*
- 1.15** Work with Alternate Neighborhood Transportation (a North Carolina company currently based in Southport, NC that specializes in street legal low speed electric vehicles) for a vehicle to be used at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. *[We will no longer pursue this, as the company is not doing anything currently. UNCC will be purchasing GEMs instead, as they have a grant for this.]*
- 1.16** Act as a clearinghouse of information on alternative fuels and alternative fuel vehicles. Information will be made available to stakeholders through meetings, periodic mailings, quarterly coalition newsletters, the CCFC web site, and a printed brochure. Additionally, staff will continue to make presentations to civic groups and will conduct educational outreach on an on-going basis. *[We have continued to act as a clearinghouse. Web site has been updated and is a valuable resource. We continue with the newsletter.]*
- 1.17** Identifying and working with targeted markets (in particular, nationally identified Clean Cities niche markets) will be an ongoing process.
- a) Fuels and Fleets Working Group will continue to identify targeted markets
 - b) School systems, niche markets, stakeholders and municipalities will be top priorities

[Should add Concord airport to that. They're trying to find a clean vehicle to use. They have already obtained some kind of grant to provide these vehicles. They have money from Exxon. They use a few electric vehicles now.]

At this point, it was decided to go on with the agenda and discuss new opportunities within Clean Cities. However, there was some general discussion before moving on.

Darryl questioned whether the overall goals of the Clean Cities coalition have changed. It was explained they CC has added “tools” to their “toolbox,” but the overall mission remains the same – fuel displacement.

Michael Williams questioned whether hybrids considered AFVs – not officially for EPA, but Clean Cities is still promoting them. GSA agencies would like to use the Escape hybrid, but the incremental cost is just too high.

Darryl suggests that we have a concerted effort to help business – provide data. He feels that we lost an opportunity with John Dabbles of EcoVehicles. We should look to the business side rather than consumer side. Darryl had to go all the way to Memphis to find a viability study for biodiesel. Have to sell it to them. Where should we put our focus? Business development should be more of a mandate.

Darryl also suggested getting NCDOT to mark alt fuel stations on their state maps. It might be hard to identify small stations, but at least a dot with station names and addresses.

New opportunities:

Hydrogen – HEAT is led by Stan Thompson. (He was on the cover of Creative Loafing this summer.) This is out of Mooresville Chamber of Commerce. They are pushing Hydrail and also working on the “delta infrastructure” for hydrogen. Other regions and states are MUCH further along with hydrogen – we need a jump start. There is an opportunity here for advancement of the hydrogen economy. HEAT is proposing that the Greater Charlotte (CCoG) area vigorously position itself as a world H2 technology rollout market for four reasons: (1) business location will follow major H2 markets, (2) fostering a public self-sense as a hydrogen city (a la Columbia SC and San Francisco) will move us into post-carbon technologies faster than even the best piecemeal programs, (3) it's a promising shortcut toward reaching and holding AQ attainment, and (4) it will put and keep NC in the world's eye as a green energy innovation Mecca.

Where do we want to position ourselves as an organization on hydrogen? Do we partner on policy?

Coach is concerned – he's not a believer yet. He is not willing to make this the primary focus. He's not convinced that it's going to happen in his lifetime. He doesn't want to throw it away, but he'd rather concentrate on things that can be done immediately. This doesn't, of course, mean we have to turn away from hydrogen. If we have a great

business outreach program, we supply information to everyone. We probably don't want to be in the lead in hydrogen. As a coalition, we can't focus in on one fuel/technology anyway. As coordinators, we can make the introduction – “here's this new technology – do you have the time to look at it? Can you talk to him?”

What can we do now to make all of these fuels more available? Should we be going to the local Chambers, suggesting they promote alt fuel as part of economic development? We need the Chamber to buy into this – as part of their business recruitment.

People are motivated by results. We're trying to change behavior. Need to do a better job of capturing success and getting the word out.

Mike Keziah mentioned that Monroe just lost a company because the area is non-attainment. We need to get the Chambers to realize that we're losing industry because of non-attainment. It needs to hit home.

Jason passed out information on grant and funding opportunities.

Daniel put into the MPO for CMAQ money for biodiesel, but he was told that the money probably wouldn't be used for biodiesel. The coalition can do a letter of support for the project. (CMAQ stands for Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality – this is grant money available to us because we are a non-attainment area.

We're working with Triangle and Solar Center on a statewide CMAQ proposal. We are requesting 2.4 million over three years to do alt fuel work over 22 counties.

There are lots of grant programs out there, but lots of communities just don't have time to write the grants or time to keep up with them. We can provide general support, but we will probably need to charge for “full” grant writing. Gail Thomas suggested that we could put a sample grant on the web site for people who just don't know how to write one. Library of grant applications on the web site. They could do some homework first.

Discussion of organizational structure

We can make this organization whatever we want it to be. It's difficult to get ongoing stakeholder involvement. We realize this is going to be primarily staff driven.

Coach remains the champion of the cause. (He suggests that we need to get Jennifer Roberts involved in the organization. She is a newly elected County Commissioner who is extremely interested in environmental issues.)

Sally is resigning her position as vice-chair.

It is possible that we don't need to “reorganize” – but stay with our current structure of having core stakeholder meetings and having ad hoc committees, as needed. We can stay

with this structure and when the need arises, focus on the working group people for their specific tasks.

A major priority would be to have a general stakeholder meeting. We need to keep them informed and have face time with them to keep them interested.

Darryl would rather see a singular focus for the year. "This year we're going to focus on..." Designate three items. But how is this implemented? What would it look like? Make an annual commitment to business development. Focus on "what will it take to get your fuel here." So we target fuel station owners.

We need to give businesses/people a vehicle to empower them to move forward with what they want to do.

Objective for 2005: to be a clearinghouse on blended fuels.

We need to get back together in about a month to discuss the specifics. When we get together, we should have a single focused mission statement that any one of us can say is the 2005 mission of the CCFC. At the next meeting we need to get a true consensus for 2005.

What about the funding for CCFC – the State should probably have additional money for us. We'll also be getting money from the statewide CMAQ proposal from the Solar Center. We should have a plan in place in case funding ever falls through.

Next meeting date – Thursday, January 27 from 10 until 12:30.

Meeting adjourned at 12:40