



For Immediate Release

CONTACT: Judy Moore, National Alternative Fuels Training Consortium
304-293-7882 (office), 304-216-3021 (cell), judy.moore@mail.wvu.edu

More than 50,000 Attend Alternative Fuels/Vehicle Awareness Events Sponsored by WVU-Based Consortium

MORGANTOWN - Alternative fuel and advanced technology vehicle awareness information was presented to more than 50,000 people in two countries as part of a massive consumer awareness campaign spearheaded by a West Virginia University-based initiative.

The National Alternative Fuels Training Consortium (NAFTC) has been on the cutting edge of heightening awareness about alternative fuel vehicles since the inception of National AFV Day Odyssey in 2002. In 90 special events in locations in the U.S. and Canada, NAFTC officials took the message about the importance of alternative fuel and advanced technology vehicles to a populace feeling the crunch of higher pump prices and worrying about the impacts of traditional fuel sources on the environment.

Headquartered at the WVU National Research Center for Coal and Energy, the NAFTC is a nationwide alternative fuel and advanced technology vehicle training organization that develops and disseminates training programs and conducts education and outreach activities. The group includes 36 higher-education institutions dedicated to educating technicians, fleet managers, government officials, students, and the public about clean, cost-effective vehicles.

The 2008 Odyssey was the largest ever one-day nationwide campaign of localized and targeted events, highlighting industry experts, educational seminars, vehicle test drives, vehicle displays, testimonials, and networking opportunities.

NAFTC Executive Director Al Ebron explained that this year's Odyssey was the fourth installment and was organized in partnership with the U.S. Department of

Energy's Clean Cities Program. U.S. Senator Robert C. Byrd (D-WV) provided special recognition of the initiative by introducing a Senate Resolution designating October 3, 2008 as National Alternative Fuel Vehicle Day. The resolution was cosponsored by 26 other U.S. Senators.

"The National Media Kick-off Event for Odyssey 2008 was hosted by Nashville Auto-Diesel College (NADC) and Clean Cities of Middle Tennessee on the campus of NADC in Nashville, TN, on October 3, 2008," Ebron said. "It drew a crowd of more than 2,000 people who took in all the vehicle displays, speakers with expertise in alternative fuels and vehicles and also many exhibits and displays. Our 2008 spokesperson was country music superstar Michael Peterson."

Two of the 90 Odyssey sites were local, West Virginia-based. The NASA IV&V Facility in Fairmont hosted an event that featured vehicle displays and test-drives. West Virginia University held an event at the WVU National Research Center for Coal and Energy on the Evansdale Campus that showcased dozens of vehicles and table-top displays, along with numerous experts who provided answers to questions regarding alternative fuel and advanced technology vehicles.

Ebron said that each year since its inception, National AFV Day Odyssey has drawn record-breaking crowds and allowed millions to learn about the importance of alternative fuel and advanced technology vehicles.

"In 2006, with 60 participating sites in three countries, the event surpassed expectations by attracting nearly 40,000 attendees and reaching more than 30 million individuals through media coverage," Ebron said.

Ebron was joined by John Mizroch, Acting Assistant Secretary for the Department of Energy's Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE); David Rodgers, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Energy Efficiency; and Christopher Zimmerman, Arlington County board member and METRO board chair, in a preliminary Odyssey event that was cosponsored by the Clean Cities Program.

The Clean Cities program is a government-industry partnership designated to reduce petroleum consumption in the transportation sector by the use of alternative fuels and vehicles, idle reduction technologies, hybrid electric vehicles, fuel blends, and fuel economy measures.

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More on the Net: www.NationalAFVDayOdyssey.org