

A close-up, high-speed photograph of a green liquid splashing upwards. The liquid is captured in mid-air, creating a dynamic, flowing shape. Numerous small, dark bubbles are suspended within the liquid, adding texture and movement. The background is a plain, light color, which makes the vibrant green liquid stand out.

GETTING GREEN WITH CLEAN DIESEL

BLUE RIDGE LUMBER
SETS AN EXAMPLE

By Tracy Powell

The hardwood industry's push for using renewable resources advanced one step further when Blue Ridge Lumber Company partnered with Stamford, Connecticut-based Clean Diesel Technologies, Inc., a firm that specializes in emissions reduction. Implementing Clean Diesel's Platinum Plus fuel-borne catalyst for the lumber company's 20-truck fleet has quickly resulted in significant savings in fuel costs.

"When I first heard of it, I was intrigued," Blue Ridge General Manager Thomas Sheets said. "I was pleasantly surprised that, for once, a product lived up to the hype."

Such sustainability-type initiatives can make a big difference in both the bottom line and the environment.

A neighbor of Blue Ridge Lumber Company, based out of Fishersville, Virginia, was a large trucking company that had been using Clean Diesel Technologies product, and with evident benefits. Sheets, who "tends to emulate a lot of the things that they do," listened to what Clean Diesel Technologies had to offer. Sheets' decision to convert his fleet was not taken lightly.

"We [are not ones] to believe everything that we are told without doing our own tests," Sheets said. "After our tests, I confirmed with the trucking company next to us, which also uses it, whether it was beneficial, and they said it was."

The measurable prospect of cost savings was conducted as a series of tests using three of Sheets' trucks. Blue Ridge installed a dispenser that allowed Platinum Plus to flow in the trucks' fuel systems. The three trucks ran three different routes: one went to the port each day; one hauled chips and dust each day; and the other truck made random long-distance runs. Different types of driving were monitored, the first two having consistent runs with consistent loads, but the third a random run. The goal was to see if it was favorable for one type of haul over the other. Some of them were full, some were half-full.

According to David Holst-Grubbe, a consultant with Clean Diesel Technologies, miles per gallon is actually a very complex subject. The key to testing is using consistency for baseline measurements.

"We looked at the baseline information and determined what they were getting in fuel efficiency," Holst-Grubbe said. "When setting up testing, you don't want to have a delivery truck that has a different driver every day that's carrying paper one day and ping-pong balls the next. You'll never be able to get a baseline to measure from. Fortunately, Tom had the trucks in use on a consistent basis, and the results were definitive."

In the end, Sheets realized some savings and switched the whole fleet over. Blue Ridge is now in its fourth month using the catalyst in its onsite bulk tanks.

HOW (AND WHY) IT WORKS

Clean diesel, by definition, is described as a standard for defining diesel fuel with substantially lowered sulfur contents. The move to clean diesel is expected to dovetail with the application of newer emissions-control technologies, which are expected to substantially lower emissions of particulate matter from diesel engines. That said, new emissions standards, dependent on the cleaner fuel, have been in effect in the United States since model year 2007.

"Blue Ridge was in a position where [Tom] needed to do two things," said Dave Holst-Grubbe, who ran the conversion project between the companies. "One was that he was aware and concerned about his company's environmental impact."

The other concern was cost of fuel.

"The charts came in right around a 12-percent savings in better mileage," Sheets said. "That was more than enough for me – I was hoping to get double-digit savings, as had the trucking company near us. As we purify the systems, continuing to convert all the trucks over to this new fuel, I think we'll find even more savings."

Top-of-mind at Clean Diesel Technologies, Inc. is maximizing fuel economy and "scrubbing" of exhaust and similar processes. The product that was immediately implemented at Blue Ridge – Platinum Plus – that addressed both fuel economy and emission reduction, has helped Sheets position his company as an environmentally responsible organization. Such sustainability-type initiatives can make a big difference in both the bottom line and the environment.

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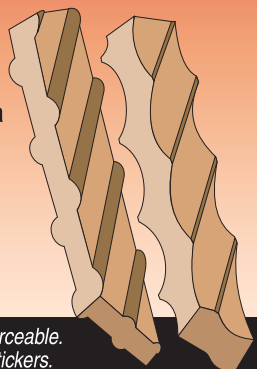
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“Perception-wise, this is going to be very important for his business, especially as part of a supply chain to many large organizations,” Holst-Grubbe said. “Going forward, businesses in general are going to have to be aware that they must have as small a carbon footprint as possible. It’s of strategic importance for any industry today to know where they stand and to definitively explain why they are a superior supplier.”

Clean Diesel Technologies’ Platinum Plus catalyst is added to the fuel supply, aided by a “doser.” The doser is a piece of equipment placed inline with the fuel hose that connects the fuel-delivery tanker with the bulk tanks. The doser’s job is to add just the right amount of catalyst into the fuel as the fuel is pumped.

“Our costs for converting to this new fuel system wasn’t much – really just the cost of the dispenser, around \$1,000,” Sheets said. It should be noted that dispenser – or dosing equipment – prices vary widely, depending on a number of factors, such as size of fuel tanks, number of tanks, and other factors.

“Fuel cost savings was the primary reason we took a look at it,” Sheets said. “But a secondary reason comes from the fact that our industry particularly has struggled with defining itself during this green movement. We think that we’re the ultimate ‘green’ people, because the natural resources are critical to our survival.”

On Sheets’ wish list is that the industry “could come together more to speak with one voice. Right now we’re speaking with several voices, all of them well intentioned. But I think people are starting to pay attention. Being known as a company that uses clean diesel is a side benefit, no doubt about it. Who is not for the environment? Everybody is.”

To point, Holst-Grubbe was standing outside of a large office supplies retailer headquartered in Massachusetts during our interview. He had just heard from the company’s executive in charge of environmental business, who said that many of their clients have sent proposals requiring the company to account for their sustainability practices. One of the examples he gave involved the paper brand sold at his stores, paper that was 80-percent agricultural waste from sugar cane and 20-percent certified re-grown pine.

“Bottom line, the whole greenhouse gas emissions issue has been talked about for several years, but now it’s actually showing up as a commercial requirement to pay attention to the issue,” Holst-Grubbe said. “When you look at all the wood that goes into all the products that we use every day, I would suggest that the hardwood industry get on the bandwagon, because the people they’re selling to are going to force them to if they don’t get a head start anyway. You may as well create an advantage while you can.”

Sheets encourages others to follow through with their own tests.

“Quite frankly, even if the cost of fuel went down, we would have still looked at this technology, because a 12-percent savings is still significant no matter the cost at the pump,” Sheets said. “There’s also better performance in the trucks, cleaner release of hydrocarbons, and the list goes on. It’s hard not to look at something like this.”

To learn more about Clean Diesel Technologies, Inc., visit their website at www.cdti.com.