



Offering an Alternative

Drivers head to Sapp Bros in Peru, Ill., to fill up with biodiesel



BY SHARON BELL, SPECIAL TO THE NATIONAL BIODIESEL BOARD

Sapp Bros Travel Center in Peru, Ill., sits in the middle of some of the most fertile farmland in the U.S. Situated on Interstate 80, the truckstop is an integral fueling site for major national fleets, local fleets and owner-operators. Truckers rely on the many amenities offered at the stop including a comfortable lounge, showers, laundry facilities, good food, free wireless and biodiesel.

General Manager Kevin Cassidy decided to offer biodiesel in late 2004 as a lower cost option for customers. Illinois has a sales tax exemption for biodiesel sold as an 11 percent blend (B11). "The lower price on B11 biodiesel that we could offer our customers and our location in the Illinois farm belt convinced us to start selling the home-grown, renewable fuel," said Cassidy. He started slow, with just two islands out of 14 pumping biodiesel. Customers liked it so much that he quickly grew the offering to half his islands. Now all 14 islands offer biodiesel exclusively.

Having the two isolated islands allowed Sapp Bros. to start small. One early chal-

lenge was blending the fuel. Initially, he had a fuel jobber deliver the blended fuel. But if the biodiesel offering was going to grow, Cassidy needed a way to cut out the middleman. He decided to devote an existing underground tank to B100 and install the infrastructure to blend the fuel on-site. The tank was carefully cleaned to remove any diesel sediment, and the location started receiving deliveries of straight B100 biodiesel. After building out a loading rack and infrastructure for blending, the blended B11 fuel could be loaded on site.

A well-maintained tank kept the B100 from any possible contamination. Using an underground tank also shelters the fuel from weather extremes. The truckstop sells B11 all winter, no matter how low the temperature. There have been no issues directly related to the biodiesel.

Quality is the number one success factor for selling biodiesel, Cassidy said. "When choosing a supplier, do your homework. Use reputable suppliers, check

The Right Tools

In the spirit of partnership, NATSO and the National Biodiesel Board (NBB) are working together to deliver information about biodiesel. NATSO members can find an electronic toolkit developed specifically for them by NBB at www.natso.com.

Operators will find NBB's views on tax incentives and grants for installing biodiesel equipment; the factors that are shaping demand for biodiesel; tips for entering the biodiesel market; and ideas for marketing the product.

NBB will be adding even more information to these pages in the weeks ahead. More tools and information on offering biodiesel are available at www.biodiesel.org.

certificates of analysis and ask for samples." Proper storage in a clean tank is extremely important to ensure a good customer experience.

Local fleets, owner-operators, and national over-the-road fleets, such as Swift Transportation, Stevens Transport, Central Refrigerated Service and TransAm are all loyal customers. "Our customers really like biodiesel. It adds lubricity to the fuel and it burns cleaner with less black smoke," said Cassidy. "We hear only positive remarks from our customers." ●

Truckstops selling biodiesel are listed on the National Biodiesel Board (NBB) trucking site, www.biotrucker.com.

Truckers rely on this site to find biodiesel on the road. It is easy to get listed — just fill out the online form.