



News Release

U.S. Department of Energy Recognizes Alamo Area Clean Cities Coalition Efforts

San Antonio, February 16, 2006 – The Alamo Area Clean Cities Coalition celebrated its continued participation in the U.S. Department of Energy’s Clean Cities program Tuesday by recognizing the efforts of local organizations and municipalities in using alternative fuel, hybrid electric vehicles, and other technologies that contribute to the reduction of the nation’s dependence on foreign oil. Among those recognized were City of San Antonio Councilman Chip Haass, Bexar County Judge Nelson Wolff and Commissioner Tommy Adkisson, Texas Senator Leticia Van de Putte, the U.S. Department of Energy’s Intergovernmental Team Leader for the Clean Cities Central Region Ernie Oakes, and AACOG Executive Director Al J. Notzon, III.

The primary goal of the U.S. Department of Energy’s Clean Cities program is to reduce America’s reliance on imported petroleum as a means of improving the nation’s energy, economic, and environmental security. Since two-thirds of imported oil is used by the transportation sector, the Department of Energy established Clean Cities coalitions throughout the United States to encourage fleet operators to decrease petroleum consumption. The Alamo Area Clean Cities Coalition supports the use of alternative fuels and alternative fuel vehicles, hybrid electric vehicles, fuel blends, heavy-truck idle reduction applications, and general fuel economy improvements to help reduce the nation’s need for imported oil in the San Antonio region.

Bexar County has been a proponent of alternative fuels for several years. Vehicles in the County’s fleet are fueled by propane. The county has been incorporating hybrid electric vehicles and vehicles capable of using E85 into the fleet as well. The first E85 public fueling station in Texas was opened at the County’s Fleet Maintenance Facility in October 2005. Judge Nelson Wolff, who is vice-chairman of the Air Improvement Resources Committee, said these initiatives are Bexar County’s contribution to improving air quality, because alternative fuels and clean technology vehicles contribute less emissions than vehicles that are fueled by gasoline and diesel.

“San Antonio has a very stiff challenge in getting its act together to clean the air and nothing would seem to be more pertinent on this critical agenda than the implementation of a serious alternative fuels program. This is especially so because the leading cause of dirty air emissions are from vehicles,” said Bexar County Commissioner Tommy Adkisson. Commissioner Adkisson was instrumental in the development of the alternative fuel station at the Bexar County Fleet Maintenance Facility.

The City of San Antonio uses propane for some of its fleet vehicles and has also acquired hybrid electric vehicles. City Councilman Chip Haass recognized the value of improving San Antonio's air quality and promoting energy and economic security. "Recent advances in technology mean that the use of alternative fuels, alternative fuel vehicles, hybrid electric vehicles, and improvements in fuel economy can show direct and very positive, helpful results for San Antonio's air quality. The City Council approved the purchase of 39 hybrid Toyota Prius cars for our city fleet, and we will continue to work in the community to be leaders in air quality improvements," he said.

Councilman Haass, who serves on the Air Improvement Resources Committee, pointed out that San Antonio's air quality problem is ground-level ozone, which is a component of smog. He urged the participants in the Clean Cities program to continue their work in promoting the use of Clean Cities technologies because these efforts contribute to the improvement of the region's air quality.

The San Antonio region has until December of 2007 to prove to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality and to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency that ground-level ozone levels in the area will remain within federal standards. If the levels exceed the federal standard, the San Antonio area will be in violation and be designated nonattainment, which will then warrant actions from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency they deem appropriate that would help improve the region's air quality.

Voluntary initiatives, such as those who use alternative fuel and hybrids, help accomplish this important goal of cleaning up our air. The City of San Antonio continues to provide examples of such initiatives. The City Council recently approved the purchase of 39 2006 Toyota Prius cars for fleet use. City Councilman Gutierrez is developing a proposal to provide free parking at downtown meters for hybrids. The first known hybrid taxi in Texas is in San Antonio. These are the types of endeavors that need to be continued to help improve the air quality and quality of life for the San Antonio region.

Senator Leticia Van de Putte participated in the celebration by recognizing stakeholders for their contributions to promote Clean Cities and help preserve the environment in the San Antonio area. Senator Van de Putte serves on the AACOG Board of Directors and was instrumental in moving the Texas Hydrogen Highway Initiative through the Texas legislature.

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