

Natural Gas Vehicles

They Heard It at the Grapevine

Michigan's Venchurs is vaulting into natural gas vehicles, teaming with Michelin and claiming Ford QVM status for dedicated-CNG and bi-fuel light trucks. The 38-year-old firm has established Venchurs Vehicle Systems – VVS – as a new division with a 135,000-square-foot build center in Adrian, Mich.

"Venchurs is a major behind-the-scenes automotive OEM Supplier that most companies have never heard of," states a release. "That's about to change in the commercial and fleet vehicle industry."

The new VVS promoted dedicated-compressed natural gas and bi-fuel conversions for Ford light trucks at Bobi's Green Fleet conference in Grapevine Texas this month.

"The Venchurs team welcomes the opportunity to bring our OE industry expertise and resources to this very important emerging market," Venchurs CEO Jeff Wyatt said in a release. "Our technology is impressive; our company and team are even more so."

'Service, Service and More Service'

"We have achieved our success based on service, service and more service. We have been doing this right for a long time and we understand that fleets need performance from their trucks and their vehicle upfitters," Wyatt said.

VVS says it's working with several national parks on a four-wheel drive, extreme-duty, CNG F-250 for search-and-rescue work. "This truck is designed, engineered and equipped as a 'hardened' vehicle to operate in the harshest California desert environments to the frozen extremes of the Rockies," the company said, noting the vehicle's anticipated utility in law enforcement, avalanche control and environmental education and research roles.

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Team Energy Forges Ahead in Florida

Team Energy is moving forward with plans to generate compressed natural gas from landfill gas in St. Cloud, Fla. using equipment and the gCNG brandname from California's FirmGreen (F&F, June 13). To facilitate financing, Team Energy is now owned by a publicly traded entity, Green Bridge Industries (Pink Sheets:GRBG).

Team Energy has a letter of intent from Refrigerated Express (also of Florida) to use the gCNG, confirms CEO Don Wood. He's also talking with St. Cloud officials about supplying fuel for city vehicles. To cut the cost of the biomethane product, it will likely be blended with conventional pipeline gas, Wood says.

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McNeilus Autocars for Homewood



Watch for Homewood Disposal to deploy 17 Autocar trucks (15 front- two rear-loaders) with McNeilus CNG installations for service in the Chicago area. Stepp Equipment is the dealer.

Saddle Creek's 40 CNG Freightliners

Saddle Creek Transportation is buying 40 CNG-fueled Freightliner Business Class M2 112 trucks to handle deliveries throughout the Florida peninsula and southern Georgia – and says it plans to add 40 more in early 2012. The Lakeland, Fla.-based firm is already promoting the CNG fleet on its website.

Saddle Creek is investing some \$2 million with Clean Energy Fuels (NASDAQ:CLNE) on a compressed natural gas fueling installation with four fast and 20 time-fill posts – and 20 more to be added next year. The Lakeland facility will be the first ever built for a for-hire fleet in Florida.

Long Range, Thanks to Agility

"This is a significant day for us," Saddle Creek Transportation president Mike DelBovo said in a release. "Because the cost of natural gas is less volatile than diesel, it allows us to have more control over our fuel costs and our customers to have a more stable fuel surcharge."

The CNG Freightliners will have Agility Fuel Systems cylinder installations behind the cab and frame-mounted on both sides, yielding a usable range of 560 miles. Two Type IV Lincoln Composites cylinders each hold approximately 25 diesel gallon equivalents of CNG, and each rail-mounted Type IV Quantum tank holds 40 DGEs.

The trucks were sold through the Tampa Truck Center. Saddle Creek, John Erwin, 863-668-4274;

john.erwin@saddlecrk.com; www.saddlecrk.com

Freightliner, Bob Carrick, 503-745-2888;

robert.carrick@daimler.com; www.freightlinertrucks.com

Clean Energy, Jim Harger, 562-493-2804, ext 223;

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Agility Fuel Systems, Jeff Scott, 615-301-5306;

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Tampa Truck Center, Chris Chasteen, 813-262-0890

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Saddle Creek Transportation will use its new CNG trucks for deliveries throughout the Florida peninsula and southern Georgia