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Fast Lubes Promote Environmental Responsibility with “Green” Workplaces

Fast lubes ushered in a new era of cleaner, more welcoming facilities, with comfortable waiting rooms, spotless restrooms and well-maintained landscaping. Today, another type of clean-up effort is underway. Environmentally-friendly car care, which takes a variety of different forms, is receiving more and more publicity.

The vast majority of fast lubes are collection points for do-it-yourself used oil – one of the requirements to receive protection from cleanup efforts at Superfund sites under the Service Station Dealer Exemption. Here are a few other ways AOCA members are proactively upgrading their operations to help the environment:

Scott Morrison, a founding partner and owner of National Autotech Inc. and its 16 City Garage locations around the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex, has a comprehensive “Go Green” campaign, a “total environmentally friendly approach to car care.” It incorporates four basic components: 1) recommended use of full synthetics to replace petroleum-based fluids (oil, transmission, power steering, differential and brake), 2) use of environmentally friendly parts and products such as recycled paper, ceramic brakes, nitrogen in tires, and aqueous-based parts washers in shops, 3) recovering and recycling of motor oil, oil filters, engine fluids, transmission and fuel filters and all parts removed from a vehicle (even shop rags are recycled), and 4) responsible management and transportation of haz-

ardous waste, parts and chemicals to recycling entities.

He has set up a separate web site, www.citygaragegreen.com, to show the public what his company is doing to protect the environment. It’s an excellent consumer education piece. Be sure especially to check out the “What is City Garage Green?” and “Why

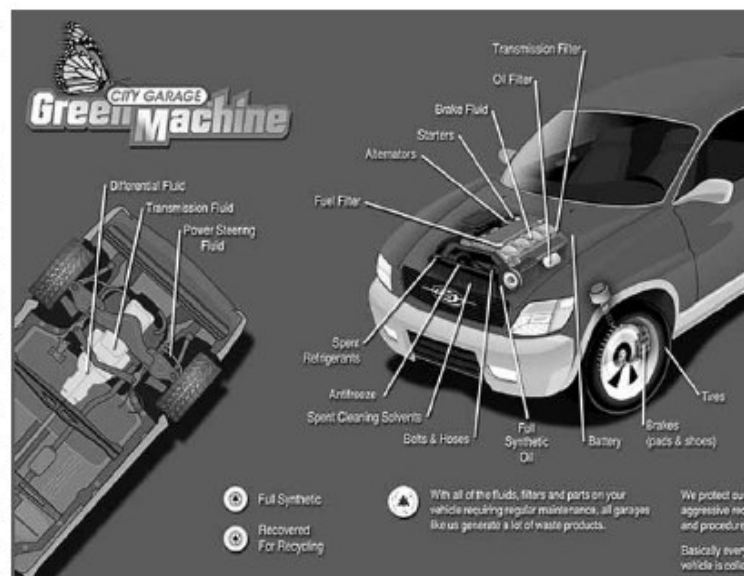
City Garage Has Gone Green” tabs. On his web site, he also has his television commercial and a reprint of a *Dallas Business Journal* article on the green campaign. Note the “clean” pictures, too – the nice looking recycling trucks, the lined 55-gallon drum of used oil filters, the shiny shop floor!

Morrison enjoys the outdoors and says “going green” is simply taking responsibility for leaving the environment in good condition for the next generation.

“Turn your car into a green machine,” the web site recommends. The campaign is supported by other marketing tools, and service writers also work to educate customers on protecting the environment.

The materials explain that in addition to petroleum-based lubricants, City Garage offers synthetic lubricants. While synthetic lubricants may cost a little more, customers

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City Garage uses a separate web site to educate consumers on its recycling efforts. This graphic shows all the car parts and fluids the fast lube recycles.

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can improve their mileage, lengthen their service interval, and help reduce our dependence on foreign oil, Morrison said.

City Garage also makes available nitrogen fills for tires, at a fee, for those who want the longer inflation life and gas mileage improvements offered with properly inflated tires.

"I am surprised by the number of people who come by the stores and request the nitrogen fill in the tires. I haven't really promoted it much lately, and we still do quite a few. I studied it and used it myself in our race cars for years before I offered it in my stores," Morrison said.

"We have gotten a lot of great feedback from our customers about being an environmentally conscious company. Some say they want to do business with a 'green' company."

AOCA Member Dan Petrey, who owns two Jiffy Lube locations in northern Illinois, is perhaps more typical of how fast lube centers are moving toward environmentally-friendly operations – one or two stores at a time, starting with recycled waste oil.

His Aurora operation recycles waste oil from vehicles and reuses it to heat its 8,000-square-foot facility, according to a recent *Beacon News* article. Petrey esti-

mated that if the business didn't recycle, about 1,200 to 1,500 gallons of oil per month would simply be hauled away. Instead, the shop can recycle 3,000 gallons of used motor oil, which is used to fuel the boiler.

"It's kind of like an old fashioned radiator system. It heats underground areas, too that are prone to moisture," Petrey stated in the article.

The Lube Stop, Inc., an AOCA member with 37 fast lubes in Northeast Ohio, has a Hybrid Vehicle Discount Program, which provides a 15 percent discount on all products and services for hybrid vehicles, including the Toyota Prius, Honda Civic Hybrid, and the Ford Escape Hybrid.

A February 2007 study released by R.L. Polk & Co., reported that sales of hybrid vehicles grew 28 percent in 2006 and represented 1.5 percent of all new vehicle sales last year. However, hybrid sales were down compared to 2005, in part, because of the expiration of consumer tax credits. Lube Stop's decision to offer a hybrid discount was made in response to the reduction in the Alternative Motor Vehicle Credit which was created under the Energy Policy Act of 2005.

As manufacturers reach the 60,000 eligible vehicle limit set by the legislation, the tax credits are phased out, including tax credits for the Toyota Prius, which were reduced 75% in April and were completely eliminated in September of this year.

"The goal of this program is to help drive higher adoption of hybrid vehicles in Northeast Ohio," said AOCA member Tom Morley, president of Lube Stop. "Lube Stop wants to lower the total cost of ownership for customers who have committed to helping the environment by purchasing a hybrid car or SUV. If other dealerships, quick oil change shops, and full service garages in the region follow this lead, more Northeast Ohioans may consider purchasing hybrid vehicles and that would be a positive change."

Lube Stop also recycles over 400,000 gallons of waste oil, 35,000 gallons of antifreeze and 350,000 oil filters annually.

Other recent initiatives include the promotion of National Ground Water Awareness Week and introduction of the Lube Stop Environmental Fleet Discount Program.

Details on Lube Stop's environmental programs can be found at <http://lubestop.com/environment.asp>. ■