

Cleveland Chain Promotes Re-refined Oil Change

In an effort to pursue a more sustainable, “closed-loop” oil change service to help the environment, The Lube Stop, Inc., the largest independently owned fast lube chain in Northeast Ohio, has added a re-refined oil change to its service menu. The new EcoGuard oil change service will be offered along side the company’s existing conventional, high mileage and full synthetic oil change services.

“Given the capabilities of today’s re-refining technologies, the broad adoption and use of re-refined motor oil is long overdue,” said Tom Morley, president of Lube Stop. “Our EcoGuard oil change is a more sustainable service that helps the environment, helps differentiate Lube Stop and furthers our mission to become a more sustainable business. I don’t mind if competitors copy us on this one given the positive implications it will have for the environment.”

Lube Stop’s EcoGuard service uses Lyden Oil Company’s ProGuard ECO Motor Oil made from re-refined base oil stocks that meet or exceed all manufacturer requirements and current ILSAC, API and U.S. Military certifications.

“Our ProGuard ECO Motor Oil utilizes high quality re-refined base oils that are combined with premium additives to create a fully certified, high-performance motor oil,” said Breen Lyden, president and CEO of Lyden Oil Company. “Re-refining motor oil is a much better way to protect the environment and our economy by reducing heavy metal emissions, greenhouse gasses and our dependence on foreign oil.”

Even with the advantages of re-refined motor oil, selling the service can pose a challenge with consumers. There is a risk of a misconception that used oil is being put back into their vehicles. Tom Morley, President of Lube Stop, is not concerned with any confusion by consumers.

“We’ve worked hard to position the service and train our team to know what re-refined oil is and isn’t,” he says. “There’s always a chance our competitors will try and use this against us, but our customers are smarter than that and they trust us to use the right oil in their car. To avoid any confusion, we have made it clear that the EcoGuard oil change is a service offering that complements our existing conventional oil change services.”

Education is a key point to preventing any confusion with customers. Morley says the company preceded the introduction of the new service with an extensive internal training initiative to make sure that employees were comfortable explaining the EcoGuard service and could quickly cover the benefits of it.

While much of the education is taking place at the store level, the company is leveraging its reminder card program to promote the EcoGuard service to its existing customers. The company also has added information about the service on its website.

“One key point we make is that the U.S. federal government, including the military in Iraq, has been using re-refined motor oil since 1998,” notes Morley.

Taking advantage of that government business is one of the biggest benefits of offering re-refined motor oil. Lube Stop expects that the EcoGuard service should help secure more business from the 1,200 GSA fleet vehicles operating in Northeast Ohio by making a competitively priced re-refined oil change service widely available in the market.

Lube Stop's technicians have embraced the new offering. "There is a tangible sense of pride throughout the entire company knowing that Lube Stop is the only quick oil change company in Northeast Ohio, and perhaps one of the first in the country, to proactively market a re-refined oil change service and the environmental benefits gained from using re-refined oil," Morley says.

Customer response has also been encouraging. "Customer feedback has been very positive," notes Morley. "A number of customers have commented that they plan to tell friends and family about the EcoGuard service."

The company even conducted a poll on its website to gauge customer interest in re-refined motor oil. Out of 375 customer responses, 75% said they were interested in a re-refined motor oil change service.

Lube Stop is pursuing a truly "closed-loop" service as it recently partnered with Columbus, Ohio-based Heartland Petroleum to collect its used motor oil. Heartland is completing the construction of the first oil re-refinery in Ohio and only the fifth such facility in North America. Once completed, Heartland will re-refine used oil, including oil from Lube Stop, to create 15 million gallons of Group II+ base oil stocks annually.

Those base stocks will be used to blend more re-refined motor oil, ultimately creating a "closed-loop" system among Lube Stop, its suppliers and customers. The result is a more sustainable service that conserves natural resources, reduces emissions and prevents environmental contamination.

The concept of the re-refined oil change service was born out of the Lube Stop's Sustainability Program, an ongoing program focused on reducing the company's ecological footprint and improving the communities in which it operates.

"I have been working on this idea for about 18 months," says Morley. "Tony Cammerata, our VP of Operations, our District and Training Managers and I started working out the inventory and training logistics at the beginning of the year. Gauging the market's interest, finding a reliable supplier and distributor, accommodating the additional inventory and conducting training all took quite a bit of time and effort from a lot of people."

The price of the EcoGuard oil change service is \$36.99, which is \$4.00 more than the conventional oil change service at Lube Stop. The company has to charge more as the re-refined motor oil comes in drums rather than bulk. The EcoGuard service is available in 5W30 and 5W20 viscosities.

Lube Stop, founded in 1985, and currently operates 37 locations in the Cleveland and Akron-Canton areas. The company recycles over 400,000 gallons of motor oil every year.

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