

**Published:**

September 21, 2006

News

News, events, features

Science/Research

Latest scientific findings

Profiles

The people behind the university

Community

Harvard and neighbor communities

Sports

Scores, highlights, upcoming games

On Campus

Newsmakers, notes, students, police log

Arts

Museums, concerts, theater

Calendar

French fries, other vegetable oil products help fuel recycling effort

Harvard Recycling and Waste Management fueled its truck with used vegetable oil from the Annenberg Hall kitchen this past Tuesday (Sept. 19) - marking a first for a Facilities Maintenance Operations (FMO) vehicle. According to recycling and waste management supervisor for FMO Rob Gogan, the oil performed "identical to diesel."

Up until recently, Harvard University Dining Services (HUDS) collected and shipped off the used oil from Harvard's deep fryers for use in cosmetics and animal feed. Now, Harvard's recycling truck will use about half of Annenberg's waste oil to fuel trips across campus picking up bulk recyclables such as computers, clothing, and scrap metal, and donations to Harvard Habitat for Humanity.

The Green Campus Loan Fund lent the money (\$5,500) to convert the truck. Based on today's prices for diesel fuel, Harvard Recycling expects fuel savings to pay back the cost of the loan in a year and a half.

The main challenge in using waste vegetable oil as a source of fuel is its viscosity. Unless it is heated to 180 degrees F, vegetable oil won't flow and ignite properly. During the winter months especially, vegetable oil can gel up like paraffin. Given its thickness, conventional diesel fuel must be used to initially start and warm up the truck. Once the waste oil reaches 180 F, the vehicle's fueling system automatically switches to the alternate fuel.

Harvard Recycling partnered with Harvard Transportation Services to install the tank and parallel fuel line and heating systems. The vendor did all the work at Transportation Services' garage, which enabled Harvard mechanics to learn about the theory.

Green Campus Resource Efficiency Program students Tatianna Bartch '06 and Jeremy Tchou '08 first advocated for the use of waste vegetable oil as fuel in 2004. "I wanted [the students] to see that we do listen to their requests and implement many of their great suggestions," Gogan said, adding, "It just takes us a while to make it happen in the real world."

Two-week listing of
upcoming events



Subscribe 

Gazette headlines
delivered to your
desktop

Copyright 2006 by the President and Fellows of Harvard College