

The Policy That Started it All

In the fall of 2004, the Roaring Fork Transportation Authority (RFTA) began using Biodiesel as one of the first tangible steps in implementing a policy developed by the RFTA Board eighteen months earlier.

The RFTA Board supports a phased approach to converting its fleet to alternative propulsion technologies as a means of:

- 1.) Reducing the environmental impacts of transit operations on the community and ,**
- 2.) Reducing RFTA's dependence on foreign oil by moving towards sustainable and renewable forms of energy.**

In doing so, RFTA will not compromise its ability to implement the service goals included in the authority's founding Intergovernmental Agreement.

This policy recognized first and foremost that that a well-used public transportation system provides huge environmental benefits and reductions in energy consumption. Regardless of fuel type or propulsion technology used by transit systems, the benefits of alternative propulsion technologies pale in comparison to simply removing personal automobiles from our roadways. The RFTA Board refused to fund an alternative fuels program or purchase any new propulsion technologies if it compromised planned service levels and operational sustainability.

After this policy was adopted, RFTA began working in conjunction with a citizens group, which later became the New Century Transportation Foundation (NCTF), to develop partnerships that led to the establishment of a Biodiesel Program and a Hybrid Bus Program. As a result of these partnerships, RFTA's entire fleet now operates on 10% renewable fuels (Biodiesel and Ethanol) and will be operating eleven hybrid buses by June of 2007.

This program has been challenging on many fronts. However, strong political and community support has allowed RFTA to move forward during difficult times. We hope that the lessons we have learned can be used by others considering moving into this evolving arena.