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N.C. Ports' green changes could cut emissions by more than 50 percent

By Jim Brumm
StarNews Correspondent

Published: Tuesday, September 22, 2009 at 5:45 p.m.
Last Modified: Tuesday, September 22, 2009 at 5:45 p.m.

The North Carolina Ports Authority is moving ahead with efforts to become a cleaner, greener neighbor.

External Links:

- [Get more environmental news and advice from the Ever green blog](#)
 - [Click here to visit Cape Fear Green Building Alliance](#)
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- Updating the authority's efforts to reduce its environmental footprint, Chief Executive Tom Eagar Tuesday reported on efforts to reduce diesel emissions and described projects under way that have been funded with state grants.
- Using a \$104,000 state clean air grant announced in July, the ports authority is installing biodiesel tanks at its ports in Wilmington and Morehead City that will allow the use of biodiesel fuel in a blend called B20 supplied by Potter Oil & Tire of Aurora, Eagar said during a news conference.
- Potter Oil's Brian Potter explained the blend is 80 percent ultra low-sulfur petroleum diesel fuel and 20

percent biodiesel transported from the Midwest by rail.

Potter said his company provides B5, B20 and B50 blends as required by customers.

Eagar said the authority is using a \$140,000 grant from the state Department of Environment and Natural Resources to retrofit its cargo-handling equipment and machinery with diesel-emission control devices. Once the emission controls have been installed and the switch to biodiesel has been completed, Eagar said, the authority expects particulate emission will be reduced nearly 55 percent in Wilmington and 62 percent in Morehead City.

To end the danger of broken hydraulic lines and other lubricant spills, Eagar said, the ports are switching to BioBlend lubricants produced by a Joliet, Ill., company. Because the lubricants are biodegradable, spills on the pier that are washed into the Cape Fear River will have no negative impact, he explained.

He said 1,100 high-efficiency light fixtures bought with a \$150,000 N.C. Energy Efficiency Reserve Fund grant made last year are now ready to be installed in warehouses in both ports.

Looking ahead, the authority displayed a pluggable Hybrid Electric Terminal Tractor that will reduce diesel fuel consumption involved in the movement of containers around the port by 50 percent, according Phillip Ford, president of the maker, Capacity of Texas.

With enough battery capacity to operate four hours a day, the hybrid replaces the 200 horsepower diesel normally used in tractors with a 40 horsepower engine and generator capable of keeping the batteries charged the rest of the day, Ford explained.

Eagar said the ports authority will help the stevedoring companies operating these tractors get grants to buy the new hybrids, noting that EPA grants are available to fund 25 percent to 50 percent of the cost of such equipment.

He said the authority is also seeking a third party to finance and install solar panels on the roof of the new 17,000-square-foot warehouse in Morehead City.

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