
GAS DAILY®

Home NGV fueling appliance hailed by lawmakers

It was another first yesterday in the quest to get more Americans driving natural gas vehicles.

The first home natural gas vehicle (NGV) refueling appliance was installed in the Washington, D.C., area.

Granted, it was a small step, but when it's in Washington, nothing that happens in the effort to get more cars fueled by natural gas is small.

The unveiling of the refueling appliance at the home of Jeff Seisler, executive director of the Natural Gas Vehicle Coalition, came complete with three natural gas vehicles, two congressmen, Canadian embassy officials, hot dogs and the star of the event, Seisler's eight-year-old daughter, Nicole, who demonstrated that even a child can refuel the family car with natural gas.

One of NGV's chief advocates in Congress, Rep. Robert Wise, D-W.Va., was on hand extolling the advantages of natural gas vehicles. He said that within weeks, with the addition of newly opened NGV refueling stations in southern West Virginia, he will be able to make the entire drive from Washington, D.C., to his home without switching his NGV car to gasoline.

He and Rep. Jim Moran, D-Va., advocated that tax incentives should be passed to encourage homeowners and fleet vehicle managers to convert to alternative-fueled vehicles.

Moran noted that Congress has given producers tax credits to drill for gas, and that now it's time to give a tax break to consumers, who use the fuel to displace imported oil.

The Canadians were on hand since FuelMaker, the NGV home-refueling manufacturer, is based in Canada. FuelMaker executives estimated that the appliance installed in the Seisler's home was about the one thousandth such appliance to be sold in North America.

FuelMaker is a joint venture of Questar, British Columbia Gas and Sulzer Brothers of Switzerland.

Wise noted that NGVs are not a technology of the "future, but a fuel of today."

While the mission of the NGV Coalition is to get more fleets using natural gas, individual cars would be secondary.

Moran gave the NGV Coalition a little more to smile about yesterday, noting that the nation's largest school bus fleet in Fairfax County, Va. of 3,000 buses is involved in discussions about converting at least some of the buses to burn natural gas. DM