

Government Fleet Top News

Columbus, Ohio, to Build Second Publicly Accessible CNG Fueling Station

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The City of Columbus plans to build a second compressed natural gas (CNG) fueling station scheduled to open in March of 2014. The new station will service the City's northern refuse fleet operation, which has more than 65 vehicles, its Planning & Operations Division, which has more than 45 vehicles, and other City divisions. Construction on the station is set to begin in August 2013, according to Kelly Reagan, Fleet Administrator for the City. The new station will be built on a 1.3 acre parcel zoned to also permit publicly accessible fueling.

Reagan told *Government Fleet* that the Fleet Division's role, as part of the Finance Department, is to meet the goals and targets outlined in Columbus Mayor Michael Coleman's Green Fleet Action Plan, which is designed to reduce the City's carbon footprint and save tax payers close to \$2 million per year by 2020 (based on current diesel prices). The City of Columbus expects to be displacing over 1.1 million gallons of diesel annually by 2020.

Reagan explained the City is building the new “fast-fill” station in an effort to maximize throughput, creating enough CNG to fuel up to 50 refuse trucks each hour.

“This will easily accommodate all internal and external fueling for private fleets for some time to come,” Reagan said. “[It’s] primarily for City use at first, but then as private-sector business grows, we expect the throughput to increase. We are ready for it!”

The new fueling station builds on the City’s success with its first station, as a number of area fleets, including Frito Lay, AT&T, Foodliner, Home City Ice and Waste Management, among others, have fueled their vehicles there.

“The City’s [first CNG station](#) (with public access) has had remarkable success to date,” Reagan said. “Life to date this station has pumped over 160,000 gallons of CNG (gasoline gallon equivalents).”

The City’s CNG stations currently provide fuel to approximately 46 CNG-fueled vehicles. By the end of 2013, the City expects to have 93 vehicles fueled by CNG. By the end of 2013, the City projects savings of \$194,150 in fuel costs (compared with the price of diesel) and tax credits of \$105,590, for total savings of \$299,740.

On a regional basis, Reagan noted that Columbus is not alone when it comes to positioning itself to growing the use of CNG as a fuel.

“Both the City of Columbus and Dublin are leaders in the region for CNG. Each is making their sites available for public access,” Reagan said. “Dublin on the north west side of town is positioned as well for maximum throughput – their station is similar in size to our first station – and is able to fill about 50 trash trucks per hour. Both City of Columbus sites have and will have the ability to accommodate tractor trailer “over –the-road” trucks. We are poised for maximum throughput, encouraging CNG growth here in the Midwest!”

Reagan noted the important role that other public-sector fleet managers have played in helping the City of Columbus build, and successfully operate, its new regional CNG fueling stations and offered advice for other public-sector fleet managers interested in CNG.

“Do your homework,” Reagan said. “Talk to other successful operators already in the CNG business, like the No. 1 ‘100 Best Fleet’ this year, Mr. [Paul Condran, from Culver City, Calif.](#) He was instrumental in providing much-needed information and resources to shorten, by decades, our learning curve for operating our own CNG sites. He has been very successful in the CNG business over the last 20 years and provides a wealth of knowledge – and he is willing to help. Another great resource from Riverside, Calif., (the No. 1 Green Fleet for 2012), is Martin Bowman, who is a real pro in the business and knows his stuff as well – he is always willing to help others [who are] jumping into the CNG business.”

By Greg Basich