

## Strategies

### New York State DoT

*Empire State's Dedicated NGV Fleet Works As Agency Buys Fueling as It Buys Vehicles*  
Simultaneous purchase of fueling capability and vehicles makes it possible for New York State's Department of Transportation to maintain a fleet of dedicated natural gas vehicles.

The agency is concentrating on compressed natural gas-fueled, light-duty vehicles now but plans to bring heavier stock, including construction and road maintenance equipment, into the fold when liquefied gas becomes available for New York vehicles.

"We're meeting our EPCAct requirement of 75 percent of replacement each year," N.Y. DoT's director of equipment management, Joe Darling, says of the National Energy Policy Act's alternative fuel vehicle purchase requirements. With about 10 percent of a fleet of 3,000 light duty vehicles annually replaced, that's about 225 to 250 purchases per year.

#### A Hero to Honda

"We will be purchasing 169 more pickups and vans in the next month and a half," Darling told *F&F* last week. They will be mostly Fords, with some General Motors and, new to the agency, DaimlerChrysler NGVs.

All will be dedicated-CNG vehicles.

"I don't have anything but dedicated," Darling says. Bi-fuel vehicles? "I wouldn't buy them," he insists.

That makes Darling something of a hero in a government fleet community that's too often lived up to the letter of EPCAct but not its spirit, buying bi-fuel or flex-fuel AFVs and then running them on gasoline.

The New York State fleet is certainly a star performer for American Honda, which has been frustrated in most of its attempts to place Ohio-built, dedicated-CNG Civic GX vehicles with government fleet operators.

"It's a pleasure to be a vendor and supply alternative fuel vehicles to a government agency that knows what they want, when they want it, and how to get it," Honda AFVs chief Steve Ellis says of N.Y. DoT. "These are suc-

cessful deployments of vehicles that work," Ellis says.

N.Y. DoT has more than 150 Civic GXes in service and with a recent order of 113 will have a total of 268.

The agency also has Ford pick-ups and vans, and General Motors NGVs, and will be adding product from DaimlerChrysler, which according to Darling has recently become more price competitive.

The agency began ordering the CNG Hondas in late 1998. Then, "We needed a way to populate the state



with fueling infrastructure," Darling says, "that we could then update as the fleet grew."

"We came up with the FuelMaker solution," he says. FuelMaker fast-fill installations were placed at 30 strategic locations around the state so drivers' mobility wouldn't be impaired. "We've got to be able to get the vehicles from one part of the state to the other," Darling observes.

Some Hurricane compressors have since been added, so N.Y. DoT now has CNG at 34 out of 207 fueling facilities. "I need CNG at each one of these sites," Darling says.

#### Big LNG Potential Too

Also in the works is an upgrade by FuelMaker to 4,500-psi storage in the stationary vessels that allow fast-fills via the Canadian company's small compressors. 4,500 psi on the ground will allow full fueling of 3,600-psi vehicles. FuelMaker president John Lyon says he's making the upgrade available at the behest of Darling.

Darling also plans for LNG fueling, both for a compressor-less route to CNG and for heavy vehicles.

That'll require a change in New York's current environmental regulations, he says, but should be well worth the effort — his agency's fleet of 3,000 light-duty vehicles grows to 16,000 when heavy duty trucks and off-road vehicles are included.

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### New York State DoT at a glance

**Headquarters:** Albany, New York

**Vehicles:** Some 16,000 including 3,000 light- and 3,000 heavy-duty road vehicles, and construction, snow removal and other heavy-duty stock. 362 dedicated-CNG vehicles as of the end of 2001.

**Key Suppliers:** American Honda, Ford, FuelMaker, General Motors, Hurricane Compressor.

*New York has state and local highways handling more than 100 billion vehicle miles per year. The system includes more than 110,000 highway miles and 17,000 bridges.*

### Key Contacts at New York State DoT

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