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New Research Again Confirms the Practicality, Benefits of Higher Ethanol Blends

Sioux Falls, SD (March 5, 2008) – Research results announced today have confirmed what the recent “Optimal Ethanol Blend-Level Investigation” found – higher blends of ethanol are indeed practical in today’s vehicle fleet and do offer benefits to consumers.

The state of Minnesota released findings today of its yearlong study on E20, the 20 percent blend of ethanol. The research, conducted at Minnesota State University-Mankato and the University of Minnesota, found that E20 presented no materials compatibility issues for current vehicles or fuel dispensing equipment. During the entire year of testing, E20 provided power and performance similar to that of E10, through a broad range of ambient weather conditions.

This corroborates the results of the “optimal blend” study, released in December, which found that blends of ethanol beyond 10 percent performed well in standard, non-flex-fuel vehicles. That research also found the conventional wisdom about ethanol’s BTU-content mileage penalty to be unfounded. Not only did the ethanol blends of E20 and E30 perform much better than predicted on an energy-content basis, but in three of the four vehicles tested, these mid-range blends actually offered increased fuel economy over straight gasoline.

“The results of Minnesota’s testing confirm what was found in the ‘optimal blend’ investigation – that higher blends of ethanol can have practical application in today’s vehicle fleet and can offer benefits to consumers,” said Brian Jennings, Executive Vice President of the American Coalition for Ethanol (ACE). “We applaud the state of Minnesota for taking this leadership role in exploring higher blends of ethanol. ACE looks forward to the day when American consumers can benefit from the widespread availability of a variety of ethanol blends at fuel stations nationwide.”

The optimal blend research was co-sponsored by ACE the U.S. Department of Energy, conducted by researchers at the University of North Dakota’s Energy & Environmental Research Center (EERC) and the Minnesota Center for Automotive Research (MnCAR) at Minnesota State University-Mankato.

The study examined the fuel economy of a variety of ethanol blends – from straight Tier 2 gasoline up to 85 percent ethanol – in four passenger cars: a Toyota Camry, Ford Fusion, flex-fuel Chevy Impala, and a standard (non-flex-fuel) Chevy Impala. In the flex-fuel Chevy, E20 offered a 15 percent mileage increase over gasoline. In both the Ford and the Toyota, E30 offered a 1 percent mileage increase over gasoline.

More details on the results of both research studies can be found here:
<http://www.ethanol.org/index.php?id=75&parentid=25>

Minnesota’s E10 requirements will move to an E20 requirement in 2013, unless ethanol has already replaced 20 percent of the state’s motor fuel by 2010. The state is conducting research required by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in order for a waiver to be considered for E20 to become an approved fuel.

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The American Coalition for Ethanol (ACE) is the grassroots voice of the U.S. ethanol industry, a national trade association for the ethanol industry with nearly 2,000 members nationwide, including farmers, ethanol producers, commodity organizations, businesses supplying goods and services to the ethanol industry, rural electric cooperatives, and individuals supportive of increased production and use of ethanol. For more information about ethanol or ACE, visit www.ethanol.org or call (605) 334-3381.