

CARROLL COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE IN GEORGIA

Overview

The Carroll County Sheriff's Office in Georgia, located 50 miles west of downtown Atlanta, began researching options for alternative fuels because major fluctuations in gas prices were drastically hindering their operations. "We were tired of being at the mercy of gas prices, which were continually causing budget problems and affecting our entire fleet and department," said Carroll County Sheriff Terry Langley. "In one month, our gasoline prices went up by almost \$1 per gallon, and that really got us looking into alternatives to gasoline. In the end, propane autogas was the most practical option for us."

Making the Switch

Carroll County began seriously looking into alternative fuel options in early 2009. "Propane autogas kept coming up, and after all of our research, it seemed to make the most sense," said Sheriff Langley. When a copy of Sheriff magazine landed on their desk featuring an article about the major successes of the Jackson County, Ga., Sheriff's propane autogas vehicle program, Sheriff Langley said it reaffirmed their decision to make the switch to propane autogas.

Carroll County worked with technology and fuel provider Alliance AutoGas to begin their transition to autogas. In the fall of 2009, Alliance converted six department patrol cars to run on propane autogas and installed a fueling station at a central location for the fleet. In early 2010, Carroll County learned about a funding opportunity to convert additional vehicles through the Southeast Propane Autogas Development Program (SPADP), which they immediately pursued.

Participating in the Southeast Propane Autogas Development Program

SPADP is a program comprised of public and private partnerships throughout 10 southeastern states, as well as Denver and Pittsburgh, that is converting more than 1,200 vehicles to propane autogas and implementing more than 30 autogas fueling stations in the region. The project is made possible by funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and the U.S. Department of Energy's Clean Cities Program. In fall 2010, Carroll County learned they were accepted to receive funding assistance through SPADP for the conversion of 30 patrol cars. "We were extremely pleased to be expanding our propane autogas fleet," said Sheriff Langley. The county's 30 vehicle conversions with SPADP were completed in 2011.

The project, which is managed and administered by the Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy and Virginia Clean Cities (VCC) at James Madison University, is helping to increase the use of propane autogas in the U.S. Autogas is the most widely used alternative fuel in the world, with more than 18 million autogas-powered vehicles across the globe, but there are only about 200,000 autogas vehicles in the U.S. Compared to gasoline, propane autogas burns 20 percent cleaner, and U.S. fleets save more than \$1-per-gallon with autogas. Ninety-eight percent of the nation's autogas supply is domestically produced.

Fleet Facts

Fleet Organization:
Carroll County Sheriff's Office

Sheriff:
Terry Langley

Industry Type:
Law Enforcement

Began Running on Autogas:
August 2009

Autogas Vehicles in Fleet:
36 Ford Crown Victorias

Estimated Annual Autogas Usage:
80,000 gallons

Est. Annual Fuel Cost Savings:
\$135,000

Autogas Fueling Infrastructure:
Two 1,000-gallon Autogas Tanks



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Results

The average patrol car for the Carroll County Sheriff's Office drives about 30,000 miles each year, which equates to significant fuel and maintenance savings with its 36 autogas vehicles. The county expects to save approximately \$135,000 in fuel costs with its current autogas vehicles; and, since autogas burns cleaner than gasoline, it will save even more on vehicle maintenance because fewer oil changes are required. The county will also displace more than 105 tons of greenhouse gas emissions each year with its 36 autogas vehicles.

Sheriff Langley said the autogas vehicle program has been well-received by the county's officers. "At first there were some questions about the flammability of the fuel, to which we explained that the fuel is as safe as gasoline – in fact, the autogas tanks are many times more puncture-resistant than gasoline tanks," said Sheriff Langley. "With a little bit of education and fueling training, the officers felt comfortable operating the autogas vehicles. Now we even have officers request to drive the propane vehicles because they have better pickup."

Captain Ken Reeves with the Sheriff's Office, a key player in bringing autogas to the county, also noted that their department's work often includes interstate travel, and their officers have not had issues locating propane autogas fueling stations in other states.

In 2012, the county was awarded funding assistance for the conversion of 10 additional vehicles through SPADP, which will be completed in early 2013. With all 46 SPADP vehicles running on autogas, the county will enjoy more than \$170,000 in fuel savings while eliminating more than 130 tons of emissions each year.

Working with Partner Vendors

Alliance AutoGas is an international network of conversion centers and fuel suppliers providing a complete program to help fleets switch to propane autogas. The Alliance network provides autogas vehicle conversions, fuel supply and support for SPADP. Alliance partner Force 911 in Pendergrass, Ga. performed the Carroll County conversions, while Blossman Gas, the nation's largest independent propane supplier and Alliance AutoGas founder, provided infrastructure for two fueling stations and supplies the county autogas year-round.

"We have had excellent relationships with our conversion center and fuel supplier," said Sheriff Langley. "We have automatic fuel delivery set up so we don't have to worry about running out of autogas. The conversion center has been dependable, timely with conversions and very informative. They even trained our lead mechanic, Spencer Rowell, who has been able to service our autogas vehicles and has really enjoyed learning about and becoming an expert with the technology."

"The move to propane autogas has been an excellent one for our county," said Sheriff Langley. "We have achieved more control over our budget, it's a safe fuel that burns cleaner and our officers like the vehicle performance. I wish we had made the switch sooner."

For Additional Information

To learn more about the Southeast Propane Autogas Development Program, visit www.usepropaneautogas.com or email info@usepropaneautogas.com. Georgia fleets interested in learning more about propane autogas should contact Don Francis, executive director of Clean Cities Atlanta, at 404-906-0656 or don@cleancitiesatlanta.net.

