

Newfound energy: editorial

Switching vehicles to natural gas would save money, cut pollution

If compressed natural gas, or CNG, catches on as the next fuel source for America's vehicles, it would have enormous ramifications for Ohio, which is sitting atop trillions of cubic feet of natural-gas deposits in the Utica shale.

The promise is great: a local energy source that is abundant, cheaper for consumers and cleaner-burning than gasoline without degrading vehicle performance. Meanwhile, the U.S. could ease its dependence on foreign oil, which enriches and empowers some of the most evil regimes in the world.

The problem is making the conversion. But as Gov. John Kasich said the other day, Ohio businesses might help with that issue.

A major reason demand is low for natural-gas vehicles is that refueling stations are few and far between. But no one builds stations because the demand for them doesn't yet exist. Vast stretches of Ohio don't have refueling stations, and the Columbus metro area has only a few. And only one automaker so far, Honda, manufactures a CNG vehicle for the public. General Motors took orders in the spring for pickup trucks that will run on both gasoline and CNG.

To break this chicken-and-egg cycle, someone has to get out front, and Kasich has called on the Ohio Chamber of Commerce and the Ohio chapter of the National Federation of Independent Business to help promote natural gas as a vehicle fuel.

While the average price of gasoline in Columbus was \$3.72 per gallon on Wednesday, the price of an equivalent unit of energy from CNG is about \$2.

Editorial continued here: <http://www.dispatch.com/content/stories/editorials/2012/10/16/newfound-energy.html>

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