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Biodiesel and the Mountains of Western North Carolina

By Brian Winslett, Director Blue Ridge Biofuels

By now you may have heard the term Biodiesel. Some of your colleagues, friends, or neighbors may be using it to run their diesel cars or heat their homes. But what exactly is it? Biodiesel is derived from vegetable and animal oils and it can be used in diesel engines with little or no alterations. Pure biodiesel (known as B100) can be blended with petro-diesel at any ratio. For example B20 contains 20% biodiesel and 80% petro-diesel. Biodiesel is also being blended with conventional home heating oil to create what is called *Bioheat*.

Bioheat is biodiesel or a biodiesel blend used as heating oil or kerosene, depending on your furnace type. For those of you interested in a safe, effective, and environmentally friendly alternative fuel, bioheat may be just what you've been looking for.

What are the advantages of Bioheat and Biodiesel? Some of the environmental advantages include: a 70% reduction in emissions and greenhouse gases, it is non-toxic, biodegradable, and virtually explosion proof. Research on Bioheat has also shown significant reduction in odor and smoke. Economic advantages of bioheat and biodiesel include: job creation, keeping money in the regional economy, and an increased life of engine pumps and other parts due to biodiesel's high lubricity. Bioheat has a comparable energy output to conventional heating oil, while the added environmental and greater economic advantages combine to give you peace of mind.

B20 bioheat blends are completely compatible with **ALL** home furnaces and monitor heaters. However, Blends above B30 furnaces may require some minor precautions or retrofits. Biodiesel will act as a detergent in your fuel tank, loosening deposits left behind by years of petroleum fuel use. Once loosened, these deposits can clog your fuel filter. After 1-3 filter changes, your system will be clean and this transitional issue disappears. It is recommended that you travel with a spare filter when first switching to blends above B30 for vehicles older than 3 years. Blends of B30 or less will avoid this phenomenon all together. In fact, starting with a B20 blend will help gradually clean out your vehicle's fuel tank or home furnace tank, making it easier to use higher blends at a later date. Additionally, vehicles made before 1993 need to have their fuel hoses replaced within the first 2 years of biodiesel usage.

How can I start using Biodiesel for home heating or in my diesel car?

Blue Ridge Biofuels is a worker/community owned local Asheville business that supplies Western North Carolina's first biodiesel pump located at 405 Haywood Road in West Asheville at the Gas Up Station, as well as delivering on-road

biodiesel and bioheat blends to your home or small business within the greater Asheville area. Keep in mind that Blue Ridge Biofuels provides blends that are completely compatible with Western NC's winter climate.

For more information about environmentally friendly and energy efficient ways to heat your home or how to become a member or volunteer of the Green Building Council, please visit our web site <http://www.wncgbc.org>. You can find upcoming events, links and information on modern building practices and energy related issues. Please contact us with any questions at: The Green Building Hotline- Call 828-232-5080 or email info@wncgbc.org