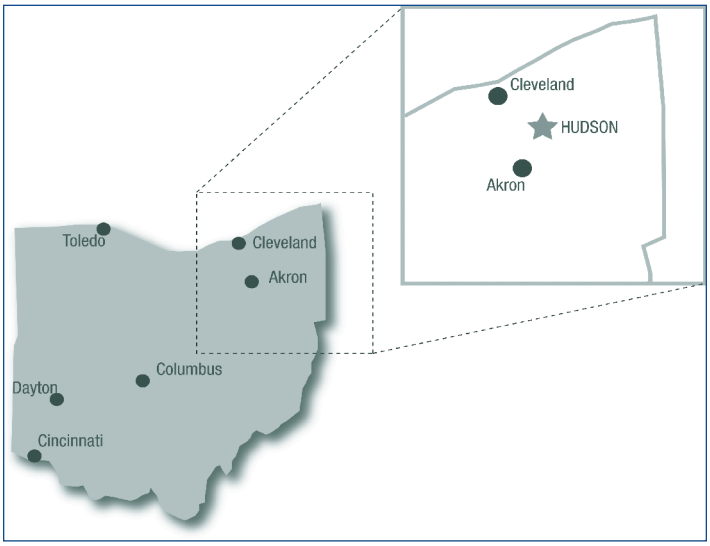
Clean Cities

Success Story April 2004

Natural Gas Moves Little Tykes in Hudson

Hudson, Ohio is a small town of 22,800 people between Akron and Cleveland. It retains much of the New England charm brought to the town by its first settlers from Connecticut in the 1600's, while still providing the conveniences of an upscale suburb of two major Ohio cities. One of Hudson's most famous residents was John Brown, the famous Civil War abolitionist who launched a famous attack on the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry, West Virginia. Among the notable



Hudson is located in Summit County in Northeastern Ohio

companies having operations in Hudson are the Little Tikes Company (maker of a wide variety of plastic toys, employing over 1,500 Ohioans) and the Jo Ann Fabrics corporate headquarters (operator of almost 1,000 fabric stores in almost every state in the U.S.).

Alternative Fuel School Bus Activities in Hudson

Hudson has been a member of the Clean Cities Program in Northeast Ohio since that coalition's designation in 1999. The Hudson City Schools, who transport about 3,800 pupils per day throughout a 36 square mile area, have been using alternative fuel buses for the last twenty years. The school district currently has a fleet of 44

Hudson City Schools

Hudson City Schools Natural Gas Buses

school buses, of which 14 are natural gas buses, most being rear-engine buses using John Deere CNG engines. They have been operating natural gas buses since the early 1980's. The majority of the buses are owned by the school district, but the entire fleet is operated and maintained by Laidlaw Education Services, one of the largest providers of school transportation services in North America. The district had about 80 percent of their fleet operating on natural gas at one time, but due to vehicle retirements that percentage has dropped to the current 30 percent. The district is working to return their fleet to 80 percent alternative fuel percentage in the future. The district's policy is to replace four buses per year, and to retire buses of all fuel types at 100,000 miles or ten years maximum.

Since the school district has begun using CNG for its buses, it has received significant support from several organizations to ease the financial burden of refueling infrastructure. The school district operates its own private refueling station to refuel the buses; some of this refueling equipment was donated by Dominion East Ohio Gas, and a grant from the Ohio Department of Development Office of Energy Efficiency was used to update the fueling station.

For More Information

For more information on Hudson's activities, please contact the local Clean Cities Coordinator:

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For more information about the City of Hudson, please visit http://www.hudson.oh.us

For more information on the Hudson City Schools, please visit: http://www.hudson.edu

Hudson City Schools

Hudson City Schools CNG Compressor for Refueling

The station has both slow-fill and fast-fill capability, and the station can refuel all 14 buses in about two hours. Until recently, the natural gas buses were more convenient to refuel than the diesel buses, as the natural gas refueling station was onsite and the diesel refueling was done offsite. (The district now has a contractor refuel the diesel buses onsite.)

The school district has been interested in alternative fuels mainly from a pollution and odor standpoint, to be good neighbors in this upscale suburb. The lack of odors from the CNG buses relative to the diesel buses is especially noticeable when the buses are idling at the beginning and end of each school day when they are waiting for students. The costs of operating the CNG buses have been roughly equivalent to the costs of operating diesel buses, with some increase in maintenance costs for the CNG buses relative to diesel. The district intentionally has kept a low profile with respect to their alternative fuel activities because their philosophy is that the natural gas buses are part of the service the district provides, and are not unusual or worthy of media coverage.

Although the school district does not seek out media attention, they do regular outreach activities through the Clean Cities Program. They regularly present their experiences at Ohio Clean Cities/Clean Fuel Seminars, and they allow the Clean Cities Programs in Ohio to bring other school district representatives to their site to talk to them about how Hudson has overcome infrastructure hurdles, how to train maintenance staff, how to apply for DOE SEP funding, and other issues.

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