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Powered by Biodiesel

Guilford's Greenleaf Biofuels

By [Pam Johnson](#)

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Have you seen the BioBug driving through town? The snazzy, mint-green Volkswagen, with its "Powered by Biodezl" decals, is the flagship vehicle of Greenleaf Biofuels. Founded in 2004 by Guilford native Gus Kellogg, Greenleaf distributes American-grown biofuel. The alternative fuel is largely produced from byproducts of oil seed crops, such as soybeans. Although his surname evokes images of corn flakes, Kellogg will be the first to tell you corn is not used to produce this biofuel. "I did recently have a guy look at my car and say, 'you're wasting crops.' The media has created a knee-jerk reaction to biofuel; that it's bad and it takes food off the table. But when you harvest soybeans, for every gallon you crush for oil, you've produced four gallons of high-protein meal," said Kellogg. The biodiesel ("biodezl" is its brand name) fueling the BioBug is less toxic than table salt, biodegrades fast as sugar, and reduces carbon dioxide emissions by up to 78 percent. If you stand close enough, you can literally smell the difference—no harsh petro-diesel fumes. Instead, you might catch a whiff of warm, unflavored cooking oil. "People do immediately notice the effect of reduction in odor," said Kellogg. And that's just the beginning. Biodiesel can directly replace petroleum diesel in any car or truck built after 1994. A natural solvent in biodiesel can degrade old rubberized fuel lines and gaskets in pre-1994 vehicles, but a modest parts upgrade allows for biodiesel use. Powering vehicles with 100 percent biodiesel, or B100, essentially eliminates emissions of sulfur oxides and sulfates contributing to acid rain; and substantially reduces smog-forming unburned hydrocarbons, carbon monoxide, and particulate matter. Greenleaf is the state's only provider of B100. "There's a huge amount of education to be done to let people in Connecticut know this is an option," said Kellogg. And it's not only an option for your diesel vehicle. "I'd say 75 percent of the people reading this are heating their homes with oil. They can blend biodiesel with home heating oil, and they'll be reducing emissions," said Kellogg. "Bioheat" is the brand name of fuel produced by a blend of home heating oil and biodiesel. Greenleaf advocates B20, which blends 80 percent low-sulfur heating oil with 20 percent biodiesel. The "drop in" blend ensures safe and consistent operation of existing equipment. B20 is also going into a growing number of Connecticut farm vehicles, including at Bishop's Orchards, as well as fleets of farm and construction equipment statewide. Greenleaf Biofuels teams with Branford's Hale Hill to deliver B20, said Kellogg. Greenleaf began distributing biofuel in 2006, after Kellogg dedicated over a year to research, planning, and development. "When I first heard about biodiesel, it really struck a chord with me. I spent endless hours on the Internet," said Kellogg, a tech-sector business development manager back then. "I convinced my wife, with our then-one year-old son, that I should take vacation time, go out to Iowa, and learn everything I could about biodiesel." Kellogg was among 25 interested entrepreneurs at a new Iowa State University biodiesel seminar. "I call it a crash course. We covered everything from business plans to chemistry and the workings of diesel engines. We learned about all the crops that could be grown and had hands-on labs," said Kellogg. The work only fueled Kellogg's interest in distributing what he feels is the best alternative fuel on the planet. "Look at the global demand for liquid fuel. We're requiring 10 billion gallons more in 2008 than in 2007. Sixty-three percent of that is coming from biofuel. It's a pretty critical component." The state's supporting Greenleaf's plans to produce biofuel in Connecticut as a way to help the environment, the economy, and to develop independent fuel sources. The company is now instituting what will be Connecticut's first biofuel industry, said Kellogg. "It's satisfying a need in terms of bettering the environment, but it also serves our interests in terms of national security. Beyond that, Connecticut has always been at the end of the energy pipeline. This is an opportunity to build a new industry in Connecticut." Plans are underway for a New Haven waterfront biodiesel plant. Oil seed crops will eventually be used in production, but at the outset, biodiesel will be produced by refining used cooking oils. The plant won't produce "fry-o-diesel"; an entirely different concept requiring engine re-design. Kellogg said

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it won't be long before a Greenleaf Biofuel oil tank stands alongside the "dino-diesel" tanks at Long Wharf fuel terminal. "We're in the final phase of design, and we hope to begin production in 2009. We expect to produce five million gallons and grow to 20 million within five years." It's a short time, but miles away from the day Kellogg first opened the Greenleaf offices on Whitfield Street. The company's still based there; and Kellogg (GHS '87) still lives in Guilford with his wife, Sarah, and their young children, Beau and Sage. Ultimately, Kellogg's effort to sell today's consumers on biodiesel is about trying to make an impact on the world his children—and their children—will inherit, he said. "Our energy needs can't be met by petroleum. The big thing is replacing fossil fuel. It's good for the environment, and it's good for the country." For more information, visit www.greenleafbiofuels.com.

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