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Michigan to Montana (M2M) I-94 Corridor Project Deployment

Interstate 94 (I-94) is a major highway connecting the Great Lakes and intermountain regions of the United States. Gaps in alternative fuel infrastructure between Port Huron, Michigan and Billings, Montana prohibited acceleration of alternative fueled vehicle deployment. The M2M Project, led by GTI Energy and funded through a $4.9 million U.S. Department of Energy grant, facilitated partnerships with Clean Cities Coalitions and deployment partners along the 1,500-mile M2M route. With M2M grant support, CNG infrastructure was installed, and natural gas vehicles were deployed to expand the availability and use of natural gas as an alternative fuel along I-94.

CNG Fuels Class 8 Long-Haul and Concrete Mixer Trucks along I-94

By using compressed natural gas (CNG) instead of diesel fuel, Contract Transport Services (CTS) has been on a mission to reduce its carbon footprint. In 2013, they purchased their first CNG powered truck. By February 2021, Contract Transport Services (CTS) owned 103 CNG powered trucks, and in March 2020, completed work on their very own, on-site CNG station that utilizes 100% renewable natural gas (RNG). Utilizing over 200,000 gallons of CNG each month, CTS is proud to move America toward a cleaner tomorrow. https://www.ctsgb.com/news/posts/compressed-natural-gas-the-cts-way/

Natural Gas Vehicles (NGVs)

NGVs are a proven vehicle technology that is both road-tested and commercially available today. Benefits include fuel cost savings, emissions reductions, reduced maintenance costs and lower overall total costs of ownership. CTS, located in Green Bay, Wisconsin, and Veriha Trucking, located Marinette, Wisconsin participated as M2M project partners. CTS operates a fleet of over 100 CNG trucks that travel the I-94 corridor daily in Wisconsin, Minnesota, Illinois, Iowa, and Michigan. The partnership with M2M enabled CTS to purchase 30 new CNG trucks for its fleet.

Veriha Trucking, a women-owned and family-owned business, provides transportation solutions in 48 states and parts of Canada. In an effort to provide safe, sustainable, and cost-effective transportation solutions, Veriha began deploying natural gas powered tractors in 2012. The partnership with M2M supported deployment of 10 additional CNG tractors.

Clean Cities organizations worked to secure both partners for the M2M project. According to both project partners, the return on investment makes sense. Although natural gas technology has improved, partners indicated the importance of obtaining vendors and equipment manufacturers who are knowledgeable regarding natural gas usage, and building a support network. Station availability for long hauls and station design for Class 8 vehicle accessibility is vital to continued adoption of natural gas vehicles.

Natural Gas Fueling Infrastructure

Since its inception in 2011, when its parent company, Ozinga, debuted its first CNG-powered concrete mixer, Ozinga Energy has been a trusted source for CNG and RNG solutions. Through a partnership with the M2M Project, Ozinga Energy constructed two natural gas fueling stations near I-94, one in Gary, Indiana and the other in New Buffalo, Michigan. Infrastructure deployment exceeded project expectations. The New Buffalo location also includes a public Electric Vehicle (EV) charging station.

Ozinga not only extended the company's reach into new public CNG fueling station markets, but also helped promote the adoption of CNG vehicles by public fleets. With a new local station, Ozinga also deployed 20 natural gas concrete mixers to their Gary facility. Photos of these stations are shown below.

Ozinga New Buffalo, MI Station

Ozinga Gary, IN Station

Project at a Glance

Fleet Types: Class 8 haulers and Cement Mixers

Fuel: Compressed natural gas (CNG)

Number of Class 8 Trucks Added: 40 CNG

Number of CNG Stations Added: 2

Motivation: Anchor fleets support fueling infrastructure along Alternative Fuel Corridors.

Related Links

- Natural Gas Vehicle Basics (https://afdc.energy.gov/files/u/publication/natural_gas_basics.pdf)
- Natural Gas Vehicle Emissions (https://afdc.energy.gov/vehicles/natural_gas_emissions.html)
- https://m2m94corridor.com/