

ENERGYSCOPE

Propane-powered Vehicles Already Being Driven on Ontario Highways

The gasoline station of the future may be a supermarket of fuels.

In addition to the usual gasoline blends and diesel fuel, a motorist may be able to choose something more exotic — such as alcohols or propane. Moving even further into the future, fuels such as compressed natural gas or hydrogen may join the list.

The Ontario government has just begun a \$75-million, five-year program to stimulate the development and use of these new transportation fuels

as alternatives to gasoline. While many of the substitutes are indeed fuels of the future, others are already in use on Ontario roads.

Take propane, for example. It has been used as a motor fuel for more than 40 years. Yet until recently in Canada, where there is a stable supply of the fuel — a byproduct of oil refining and natural gas processing — propane has been used mostly in off-road vehicles such as fork-lift trucks in factories.

It became popular for on-

road fleet vehicles only when the prices of gasoline and diesel fuel began to soar.

Now, 3,000 propane-powered vehicles are travelling on Ontario highways. Most belong to fleets because propane distribution centres are still rather scarce when compared with retail gasoline stations. There is also a need for careful quality control over conversions and maintenance.

It is still not certain whether propane will ever be widely used by motorists as opposed to fleet operators.

Propane costs the consumer less than gasoline and it is cleaner because it burns as a dry gas, leading to maintenance savings through cleaner engines, fewer oil changes and longer spark plug life.

Owners considering propane as a fuel for their vehicles are eligible for a variety of provincial tax incentives, including exemption from the seven-per-cent provincial sales tax for the vehicles themselves and the 20-per-cent ad valorem road use tax for the fuel. The federal government also offers a taxable grant of up to \$400 toward the costs of a commercial vehicle conversion to propane.

Propane is a safe, efficient fuel. Owners of fleets ranging from taxicabs to delivery trucks are generally pleased with the performance and economy of their propane-powered vehicles. There are even police cars in Ontario

which use propane as a fuel yet perform as well as standard gasoline-powered vehicles.

The Ontario Ministry of Energy anticipates that 40,000 propane-powered vehicles will be on the road by 1985.

To help meet this target, the Ministry, together with the Ministry of Transportation and Communications, is conducting DRIVE: PROPANE — a demonstration which compares propane-powered vehicles with those using conventional fuels.

The Ontario government is also using more propane-powered vehicles in its own fleet, as well as reviewing the safety and performance of propane vehicles and training mechanics to service them.

Energy Minister Robert Welch points out that propane is just one of several fuels which will help Ontario and Canada reduce their dependence on gasoline. Trans-

portation fuels are vital to this challenge because half of the crude oil consumed in Ontario is used for transportation — and most of this is used in automobiles.



Energy Ontario

ENERGYSCOPE is prepared by the Ontario Ministry of Energy as part of Energy Ontario

TRIVIA



Late Bloomer

Sagebrush, the ubiquitous little shrub that covers 130 million acres in the West, is both a curse and a blessing.

Now, because of its ten-

acity, hardiness, and sheer volume, it is being increasingly viewed as a friend — a vital part of Western ecology that can be put to use for man and his environment.

Stand or Fall

Most politicians stand for what they think the public will fall for.

Ontario Provincial Parks Meet Needs of Disabled

Ontario's disabled persons, who may have been prevented in the past from enjoying Ontario's provincial parks because access has been difficult, will find some welcome changes this summer.

Natural Resources Minister Alan Pope said municipalities operating buses for the disabled, will soon be receiving, along with park entry permits, a list from his Ministry of parks with washroom facilities specially designed to accommodate wheelchairs.

"In addition, some people may not be aware of our long-standing policy to provide

group camping and day use privileges to members of agencies for the mentally or physically disabled. I wish to emphasize this, particularly since 1981 is the International Year of Disabled Persons," Mr. Pope said.

All groups for the disabled, who are planning a day's outing, should notify the park superintendent at least 24 hours in advance to ensure space.

An application for group camping should be made to the superintendent at least two weeks in advance.



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LOOK FOR IT — Wednesdays and Fridays, for new restaurant possibilities and old favourites.