

Greening the transportation and vehicle fleet is an all-around effort

By Annalisa Cachin, Naval Facilities Engineering Command Mid-Atlantic Public Affairs

NORFOLK, Va. -- As Energy Awareness Month comes to an end, Naval Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFAC) Mid-Atlantic is encouraging commands across the region to continue the use of Alternative Fuel Vehicles (AFVs) throughout the transportation fleet.

NAVFAC is the Central Manager of the Navy's Base Support Vehicle and Equipment (BSVE) Program, of which the use of AFVs are an integral part in contributing to President Obama's Federal Fleet Performance Memorandum, released May 24, asking the federal government to serve as an example to American citizens and help meet national goals of reducing oil imports.

The memorandum states that the federal government, operating the largest fleet of light duty vehicles in America, has the responsibility to operate only as many vehicles as needed to work efficiently, leveraging federal purchasing dollars to build manufacturing capacity for more alternative fueled vehicles and reducing petroleum consumption through efficiency and alternative fuels.

Currently, 52.5 percent (2,598 vehicles) of the fleet in the Mid-Atlantic region is comprised of Flex-Fuel vehicles. Flex-Fuel vehicles are a type of AFV that uses E-85 fuel - the blend of 85 percent ethanol and 15 percent gasoline. This year, 68 regional police vehicles, 15 passenger vans and 50 minivans were added to the Flex-Fuel vehicle fleet. Of the Navy's 46,485 non-tactical vehicle fleet, approximately half of the light and medium vehicles are alternatively-fueled.

"Over the last five years as part of reducing Navy's fuel consumption, NAVFAC transportation has replaced a majority of its vehicles with Flex-Fuel vehicles," said Megan Snyder, engineering aid in NAVFAC Mid-Atlantic's Transportation department. Current regulations mandate that all Flex-Fuel vehicles use E-85 fuel. "If an alternative fuel such as E-85 is available within five miles, one-way or a 15 minute drive of your site, you are required to use it," added Snyder. "This fuel is also more environmentally friendly and good for the country's goal for energy independence."

In the Hampton Roads area, E-85 fueling stations can be found at the Navy Exchanges of Naval Station Norfolk, Naval Air Station Oceana and Naval Weapons Station Yorktown, as well as the Norfolk Naval Shipyard.

"In order to reach the government's goal of decreasing energy intensity by three percent annually, every participant must contribute," said Snyder. "Out of the total gallons of fuel that the fleet used in April and May 2011, only eight percent were E-85 even though we could have accomplished almost 100 percent. We are asking you to help do your part to reduce our nation's dependence on foreign fuels."