

Help Produce Biodiesel by Recycling Cooking Grease

By Megan Piner
Henderson County Environmental Programs Coordinator

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Facts

Contact Megan Piner at 828-694-6524 or mpiner@hendersoncountync.org. Piner also is available to speak to community groups about recycling in Henderson County.

Have you ever wondered how biodiesel is made? Or have you even heard of biodiesel?

Biodiesel is made through a chemical process called transesterification where the glycerin is separated from the fat or vegetable oil.

The process leaves behind two byproducts, methyl esters (the chemical name for biodiesel) and glycerin, a valuable byproduct usually sold to be used in soaps and other products.

The methyl esters then are blended with regular diesel to make biodiesel blends that normally are sold in gas stations and for heating oil.

Fuel-grade biodiesel must be produced to strict industry specifications in order to insure proper performance.

Often people just pour their used cooking grease down their drains because they are not sure where to dispose of the spent grease.

Pouring cooking grease down drains is extremely costly to those who operate sewer systems; the city of Hendersonville spends about \$1,500 to \$3,000 per blockage, plus any damage done to homes. That can easily reach \$5,000, which the homeowner is typically responsible for covering.

The city of Hendersonville has identified grease as the No. 1 problem for blockages in the sewer system.

Often, the grease itself is not the full blockage. Often a minor blockage, such as a root or a rock, is compounded with grease attaching to the minor blockage, which causes major problems.

So what is the best alternative to putting grease down the drain? Recycling! You can recycle your used cooking grease.

Currently, we only have one location for public cooking grease recycling, located at the Convenience Center, on Convenience Center Drive (Recycling Center off Stoney Mountain Road) but hope to have more locations for cooking oil recycling throughout the county in the future.

Henderson County partners with Blue Ridge Biofuels to collect the used cooking oil at the convenience center.

Blue Ridge Biofuels collects the cooking oil, takes it to its production facility located in the River Arts District in Asheville, where it is made into clean-burning, locally made biodiesel.

Biodiesel can be run in many diesel engines, including trucks, cars, heavy equipment and even home heating furnaces.

In fact, all of the diesel engines at the Henderson County Transfer Station use biodiesel, since no modifications are needed for a diesel engine to run on biodiesel.

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