

Compressed natural gas fueling station opens to public

- By JULIE DRAKE Valley Press Staff Writer



Manny Alacorn of SoCal Gas demonstrates how to fuel a CNG truck, Wednesday morning, after the ribbon cutting ceremony for the new open-to-the-public CNG fueling station at the Antelope Valley Recycling and Disposal Facility.

JULIE DRAKE/Valley Press

PALMDALE — The first public CNG (compressed natural gas) fueling station in the city is open. City officials joined WM (formerly Waste Management) and SoCal Gas officials and other dignitaries, on Wednesday, for a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the Antelope Valley Recycling and Disposal Facility, at the Palmdale Landfill.

“This is all-important to be going to renewable gases, to renewable energy, that’s the way of the future,” Mayor Steve Hofbauer said, “and we’re really pleased to have this here in the City of Palmdale.”

Hofbauer, Mayor Pro Tem Richard Loa and Councilman Austin Bishop presented WM District Manager John Welson with a certificate of recognition in honor of the occasion.

Councilman Bishop, who also serves as vice chair of the Antelope Valley Air Quality Management District Board of Directors, thanked WM for its partnership with Palmdale to not only clean up the city but also keep a good service running.

"The (WM) trucks are all going to be CNG, so they're not going to be using any of the dirty diesel anymore," Bishop added. "For those of you that don't know, the CNG is up to at least 20% cleaner as far as air quality goes. When you add up a fleet this size with all these trucks, it definitely makes a difference."

Bishop added the CNG station could provide means for some of the Valley's approximately 70,000 to 80,000 commuters to fill up before they head over the hill if they have a CNG fuel vehicle.

"It's a step in the right direction," Bishop said.

The AV Air Quality Management District awarded WM a \$349,000 grant that was used toward building the CNG fueling station, Bishop said. There was an additional \$500,000 grant for the conversion of the WM trash trucks.

WM worked with Palmdale more than 10 years ago for its conditional use permit, Welson said. "One of the things that was important for the condition of the CUP was implementing a greenhouse reduction plan," Welson said.

The company made a long-term commitment to convert its fleets to natural gas.

"I'm proud to say that our entire collection fleet is 100% natural gas," Welson said.

The majority of the fleet is LNG, or liquefied natural gas, as the company moves toward 100% CNG.

The CNG station at the Palmdale Landfill, 1200 City Ranch Road, will be open from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday.

Welson thanked the AV Air Quality Management District for the grant awards to help the company with the program.

In addition to the fueling station, the facility has a new parking lot with 85 spots that double as fueling stations for the trucks. Workers can park their trucks, plug in and have a full tank when

they arrive for work the next morning. There is also a new customer service building. In addition, the company added 16 bays to the maintenance facility.

The total cost for the facility upgrade was about \$7.7 million, Welson said.

Welson also received certificates from Jackie Owens, field representative for Rep. Mike Garcia; Brandon Roque, field representative for state Sen. Scott Wilk; and Anna Zarley, field representative for Assemblyman Tom Lackey. The Antelope Valley Chambers of Commerce and Antelope Valley Hispanic Chambers of Commerce also presented certificates.

Welson also thanked SoCal Gas for its support.

"We're super glad to be here to celebrate Waste Management's completion of this CNG station," said Don Widjaja, vice president of Customer Solutions for SoCal Gas.

Compressed natural gas is fueled by renewable natural gas, Widjaja said. He added renewable natural gas is a sustainable fuel made from methane, that would otherwise be emitted through the landfills, dairies and other resources.

"It's no secret that cleaner air starts with cleaner trucks," Widjaja said.

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