



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Odyssey Day highlights path to energy independence**

*Bessemer, Ala.* — Over a hundred visitors turned out at Lawson State Community College's Bessemer campus to take part in the nationwide celebration of Odyssey Day 2010, a biennial event showcasing the important role alternative fuels and advanced technology vehicles play in reducing our nation's dependence on foreign oil, improving air quality and bolstering our domestic economy. Organized by the National Alternative Fuels Training Consortium (NAFTC) with local partners such as the Alabama Clean Fuels Coalition and Lawson State Community College, Odyssey Day is the largest event of its kind in the nation. Over 100 partners across the United States hosted AFV Odyssey Day 2010 events today.

"The Alabama Clean Fuels Coalition is honored to be the host of Odyssey Day 2010 along with our partner Lawson State Community College to help educate our state on the advantages and applications of alternative fuels," said Mark Bentley, Executive Director of the Alabama Clean Fuels Coalition. "Alternative fuels and advanced technology vehicle production are growing industries in Alabama that offer the potential for new job creation to expand our domestic economy. In 2009 almost 1.6 million gallons of petroleum were displaced with alternatives fuels in Alabama."

Lawson State Community College's Bessemer campus provided space for alternative fuel vehicles, classrooms for educational seminars, and tours of the college's Alabama Center for Automotive Excellence, an on-campus facility utilized to train automotive technicians. Lawson State recently unveiled a compressed natural gas vehicle fueling station and created a program that trains technicians to work on alternative fuel vehicles.

"Our involvement with the alternative fuels program is a part of the college's initiative to go green as well as reduce the dependency on foreign oil," said Tommy Hobbs, business and industry liaison for Lawson State. "We are one of only 50 National Training Centers and the only one in Alabama for training technicians to work on alternative fuel vehicles. Also, it is our understanding that Lawson State is the only community college in the Southeast to have its own compressed natural gas fueling station."

In 2002 the National Alternative Fuels Training Consortium (NAFTC) established Odyssey Day to help educate Americans about alternative fuels and advanced technology vehicles and the important role they play in reducing our dependence on foreign petroleum and improving our air quality. Odyssey Day provides audiences of all ages and professions the opportunity to become acquainted with viable, clean vehicle and fuel alternatives.

Since its beginning in 2002, the number of Odyssey Day locations across the country has doubled. This year national attendance was expected to be well over 200,000 with a net reach of more than 75 million Americans when media coverage was included.

The Alabama Clean Fuels Coalition and Lawson State Community College Odyssey Day 2010 event included information on the future of alternative fuels, provided an opportunity to test-drive many of the alternative fuel and advanced technology vehicles on display, and featured

seminars on practical applications of alternative fuels such as E85 ethanol, propane, compressed natural gas, biodiesel, and electric vehicles that can be implemented in operations immediately.

"When you look at alternative fuels, you need to focus on how they can be utilized in everyday applications that are financially sound and help improve other issues such as air quality," said Trussville Mayor Gene Melton. "For instance, we are converting our police vehicle fleet to compressed natural gas, along with encouraging our school system to convert diesel-operated school buses to compressed natural gas. The next contract renewal will require the vendor to use compressed natural gas vehicles as well. We are also looking at possibly switching trash pickup vehicles from diesel to compressed natural gas. These measures will significantly reduce tailpipe emissions and save the City of Trussville money on fueling costs."

Attendees at Odyssey Day 2010 had the opportunity to learn about saving money on daily commuting, provided by CommuteSmart. Furthermore, guests were treated to *free* vehicle emissions testing. If a visitor's vehicle was under 10 years old with less than 150,000 miles and was found to have emissions problems, the Alabama Partners for Clean Air provided them with up to \$500 to get the issue resolved.

"Motor vehicles in Jefferson and Shelby counties are a major contributor to air quality issues that can pose serious health issues to all of our citizens, and our air quality has also cost the Jefferson and Shelby Counties area jobs and economic development," said Danny Patterson, Alabama Partners for Clean Air. "We are proud to take part in Odyssey Day 2010 because people need to know that alternative fuels are a great way to reduce tailpipe emissions and improve our air quality."

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**ABOUT ODYSSEY DAY:**

*National AFV Day Odyssey 2010 is developed and coordinated by the National Alternative Fuels Training Consortium with our participating national partners and is coordinated locally by the Alabama Clean Fuels Coalition and Lawson State Community College.*

**ABOUT THE ALABAMA CLEAN FUELS COALITION:**

*The Alabama Clean Fuels Coalition is the state's leading advocate for alternative fuels. The promotion of clean, renewable, domestic energy sources helps reduce our dependence on foreign oil, improves local air quality, and increases economic development investments in our local communities. For more information, please visit our website at [www.AlabamaCleanFuels.org](http://www.AlabamaCleanFuels.org) or call us directly at 205-402-2755.*

**ABOUT LAWSON STATE:**

*Lawson State Community College is a member of the National Alternative Fuels Training Consortium (NAFTC). Headquartered at West Virginia University, the NAFTC is the only nationwide training organization for alternative fuel vehicle and advanced technology vehicle training in the United States. Lawson State is one of only 50 National Training Centers and the only one in Alabama.*

*As a National Training Center, Lawson State will provide classes and workshops covering a wide array of topics such as biodiesel, ethanol, compressed natural gas (CNG) liquefied natural gas (LNG), battery-powered & electric vehicles, advanced technology vehicles, and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG/Propane).*