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City's trucks will try out new fuel;
In an effort to become a 'green city,' Coral Gables is trying out **biodiesel** fuel.

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Coral Gables is about to become the first city in South Florida to try using environmentally friendly **biodiesel** fuel to power some of its older municipal trucks.

Officials say they are taking the step to help make Coral Gables a good example of a so-called "green city," one that is aware of what it is doing to the environment.

"We are trying our best to do the things in our city that would classify us as a 'green city,'" said Mayor Don Slesnick.

As part of the greening effort, the city is taking part in the **biodiesel** initiative, sponsored by SolarDiesel Corp.

City Manager David Brown said the pilot program aims to cut back on the use of regular diesel. It is being implemented "to show us our fleet could be environmental."

In the regular diesel mixture, there are hundreds of chemicals that produce the same dangerous compounds as in cigarette smoke, said Peter Calvert, chief technical officer from SolarDiesel.

"**Biodiesel** lacks those entirely; they are just not there," Calvert said.

The city hopes to get the program under way shortly.

"We signed an agreement with the suppliers and are just waiting for them to supply a fuel storage tank," said Clive Cork, automotive director. "We are hoping by the end of the month that three of our trucks will have made the transition into using the **biodiesel** fuel."

One garbage truck and two dump trucks will be tested during a 60-day trial period. There will be a lot of data collected. And depending on those results, city workers will begin to look at other technical issues they would face in making a complete transformation to **biodiesel**, Cork said.

Part of the experiment also will be seeing whether the cost will be reduced or remain the same when using **biodiesel**.

SolarDiesel said the trucks' performance will not change as a result of the new fuel. The only costs will be related to cleaning out the fuel lines and filters in the truck and for the test-run, which SolarDiesel is picking up.

Also, oils tend to form waxy substances and they have to be sure that the temperature for storage is feasible and that their suppliers can supply the fuel they need, especially during hurricane season, Cork said.

Biodiesel fuel is made from vegetable or animal oils that burn very clean and limit the amount of emissions, resulting in a cleaner atmosphere Cork said. "That is why they call it green fuel," he said.

The mixture that the city will be testing will be 80 percent regular diesel and 20 percent **bio-diesel** produced from palm oil, creating what is known as B20.

"The first thing we want to do is to see if it works," Cork said. "I don't think we will go 100 percent. Some of the brand-new vehicles are still under warranty."

There is a big environmental benefit with the newer trucks, Calvert said, because they produce 1/60th of the emissions as trucks built 10 years ago.

"What about these old ones?" Calvert asked. "It is great the new ones are clean; **biodiesel** offers a way of cleaning up these older vehicles without sinking a lot of money into them."

The city is committed to doing the **biodiesel** project, Slesnick said, along with other greening efforts that are being made, such as landscaping and encouraging residents to build green-friendly buildings.

"This is another step that we could take on the road to a friendly environment," he said.