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By Matt Fredmonsky
6 hours ago



By Matt Fredmonsky
Record-Courier staff writer

SUFFIELD " Simple and clean, that's how Jackie and Bill Garmier run their Suffield-based business, Renewable Lubricants. The company has attracted grants and contracts from large agencies like the U.S. Department of Defense and world-renown Lubrizol Corp. " to name just two.

The Garmiers formulate 150 bio-based lubricant products as replacements for nearly everything petroleum " including automotive oils and hydraulic fluids " and hold U.S. patents that stand in more than 100 countries worldwide.

As Ohio's leading biolubricants producer, the fourth-generation family operated business is enjoying tremendous success. Renewable Lubricants' customer list for its agricultural vegetable-based products is long and varied. It includes the city of North Olmsted, car manufacturer BMW's Oracle Racing team yacht, the Portage Park District, Louisville-based International Hot Rod Association seven-time champion drag racer Mark Thomas and the Portage Area Regional Transportation Authority.

Since 1991, \$4 million in grants and in-kind donations have helped foster the company's national and global successes.

Renewable Lubricants' local success in Portage County with PARTA is creating high levels of interest throughout the region and is quickly making the company the perpetual poster child for Ohio's green movement.

"What's important about PARTA is it allows us in our local area to help our people understand the benefits of the bio-based programs and who we are," said Bill Garmier.

PARTA is Renewable Lubricants' first transit agency customer. Every fluid of the entire 67-bus PARTA fleet has been replaced or modified by the products rolling out of a modest, yet high-tech, Suffield farmstead.

The company's engine oils lubricate every engine, and its diesel fuel conditioner has improved fuel economy of the buses on a broad range from four to 16 percent, depending upon the age of the bus.

"Everything in the buses is green," said Brian Trautman, PARTA's director of maintenance and operations.

The fuel conditioners alone have saved the county's transit authority an estimated \$50,000 in annual fuel costs.

Frank Hairston, PARTA's director of marketing and customer service, said a cloud of black soot and smoke that once hung over the PARTA headquarters on Summit Street has disappeared since the transit agency began using the lubes and fuel conditioners in August 2005.

"We were also looking at our impact on the environment," Hairston said.

High-Priced Savings

While the switch has saved taxpayer money, the changeover did come at a cost. In 2007, PARTA spent \$30,000 on nearly 700 gallons of Renewable Lubricants products, which sell at about one and a half times the price of conventional petroleum products, Trautman said. But PARTA mechanics have tested the bio-based engine oil to show it has a longer life span than its petroleum competitor by about 1,500 miles.

"So we've actually pushed our oil changes out further," Trautman said. "It's not cheap going green, but that brings it closer to an even exchange. It still costs more money to do that, but one



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oil spill and remediation of that oil spill will save me the cost overnight." Renewable Lubricants are based on natural ingredients. All of the company's products are based on either soybean, canola, corn or sunflower oils. Moderate amounts of synthetics are a part of the mix. But a spill, though it must be cleaned up, is virtually harmless to the environment and requires less effort to clean than petroleum products.

"Growing" Interest

The company has generated business from dozens of governmental agencies and organizations. The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Energy and Interior have all contracted with the Portage County company. The United Soybean Board, the Ohio Soybean Council, Penn State University and several private industry giants also have partnered with the Garmiers. PARTA's role has garnered attention from Summit County's engineer, who is considering replacing all the fluids in the county's snow plows, construction and other equipment with Renewable Lubricants, Jackie Garmier said.

"I'm really excited about it," she said.

The couple has several other potentially multi-million dollar ideas and contracts brewing, though they're not quite ready to announce those agreements publicly.

The intense interest has people like Hairston and Trautman working hard to get Ohio's state and national representatives to help the Garmiers expand their operation and make Portage County a leader among Ohio's green revolution. PARTA's board of directors also is supporting the endeavor.

"They see the possibilities for economic development," Hairston said. "A county going green, that's a vision for us."

The growing interest in their company has Bill and Jackie Garmier keeping an eye on their roots by committing expansion options to Ohio and Portage County.

"Being a farm boy, I just decided there were other ways to make lubricants other than out of petroleum," Bill Garmier said. "When we started this, oil was \$9 a barrel. It didn't even make sense to look at this."



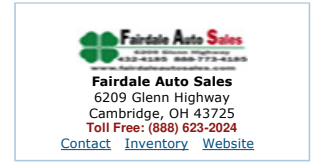
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Posted by Rob Anderson 1 hours ago
And Kent State University is not already one of Mr. Garmier's clients why?

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