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Dixie Chopper rolling out unique CNG-powered mower for AF&V show in Las Vegas

Dixie Chopper's revolutionary Eco-Eagle, the world's first compressed natural gas-powered lawn mower, will mark its first anniversary when the AF&V 2010 show unfolds May 9-12 in Las Vegas.

The 16th annual conference on alternative fuels, vehicles and advanced technologies will be staged at the Rio All-Suite Hotel. Dixie Chopper will have a booth at the Las Vegas conference and the CNG-powered Eco-Eagle will be part of the hands-on Ride-n-Drive segment of the show.

Dixie Chopper President Gary A. Morgan, Western States Territory Manager Tom Metz, Government Fleet Representative Michelle Wallace and Territory Manager Kraig Richmond will represent the Indiana-based company at the four-day expo. The Dixie Chopper propane-powered mower will also be on display at the show.

AF&V 2010 is designed to showcase natural gas, ethanol, biodiesel, propane, electricity and hydrogen, along with their companion vehicles. The conference embraces advanced technologies that result in fuel efficiency, petroleum displacement and emissions improvements.

A prototype of the Dixie Chopper Eco-Eagle debuted at the 2009 AF&V show in Orlando, earning at least a mention on more than 30 websites and in numerous general publications.

In conjunction with its return appearance to the AF&V show in 2010, Dixie Chopper is pleased to announce that its Xcaliber Eco-Eagle, has passed all Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) certification testing and that California Air Research Board (CARB) certification is in process and is expected to be finalized shortly.

The unit is manufactured with the same features that helped make the Xcaliber mower series Dixie Chopper's most rugged and powerful zero-turn model. Powered by a 990cc Generac engine, the Eco-Eagle features a 66-inch deck that assures Dixie Chopper's unrivaled quality of cut. The CNG mower also has springer front forks, an electric deck lift and deluxe seat – all designed to facilitate operator ease and comfort.

Since natural gas is a cleaner-burning fuel than gasoline or diesel, many progressive cities and towns are converting their vehicles and equipment to run on

this fuel. That enables them not only to be as environmentally friendly as possible but also to take advantage of cost savings and the excellent public relations impact associated with “green” equipment.

A fossil fuel, CNG is made by compressing natural gas --- mainly composed of methane – to less than 1% of its volume at standard atmospheric pressure. Although compressed natural gas (CNG) does produce some greenhouse gases during combustion, it is a more environmentally friendly alternative to gasoline, diesel or even propane. Since natural gas is lighter than air and disperses quickly when released, fuel industry tests indicate CNG is much safer than other fuels in case of a leak.

Studies (including a 2001 Swedish survey) have shown that air pollution from cutting grass for one hour with a gasoline-powered mower is nearly equivalent to that from a 350-mile automobile trip. Gasoline mowers emit hydrocarbons, and older models with powerful but less efficient two-cycle engines can release as much as 30 percent of their oil and gasoline unburned into the air.

The EPA says the 54 million Americans mowing their lawns each weekend with gasoline-powered mowers may be contributing as much as 5 percent of the nation’s air pollution.

Over the course of one year, a gasoline-powered mower spews 87 pounds of greenhouse gas (CO₂) and 54 pounds of other pollutants, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Amazingly, that equals as much air pollution as 40 new cars being driven 12,000 miles.

Need a visual on that? Look out the window at your company parking lot the next time the lawn service mows the grounds. Those cars out there are sitting idly for 8-10 hours, but the gasoline-fueled mower is working and emitting hydrocarbons for basically the entire 8- to 10- hour day.

Need another shocker? The EPA estimates that 17 million gallons of fuel – mostly gasoline – are spilled each year while lawn equipment is being refilled. That is more than all of the oil the infamous Exxon Valdez spilled (10.8 million gallons) in the Gulf of Alaska in 1989. In addition to groundwater contamination, spilled fuel evaporates into the air and contributes to smog-forming ozone when cooked by sunlight and heat.