



VIEW*S* & VISIONS

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The Transportation Fuel Source of Tomorrow

The Honorable Earl Ray Tomblin, Governor
State of West Virginia

Governor Earl Ray Tomblin serves as the 35th governor of the Mountain State. A Logan County native, Governor Tomblin received his undergraduate degree from West Virginia University, and an MBA from Marshall University.

A self-employed businessman and former school teacher, Governor Tomblin was elected to the West Virginia House of Delegates in 1974 at the age of 22 and served in the house until he was elected to the West Virginia Senate in 1980. Governor Tomblin was the longest serving Senate President and was named the state's first Lieutenant Governor in 2000.

We have an abundance of natural gas right here in West Virginia. Now is the time for us to begin transitioning to the transportation fuel source of tomorrow. The transition to natural gas-fueled vehicles must begin now, so that our auto industry and private sector fuel retailers can embrace the future by manufacturing natural gas vehicles and equipping filling stations with natural gas fuel.

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The United States has the capacity to significantly wean itself from foreign oil dependency. With 98 percent of the natural gas used in the United States produced in the United States and Canada, its reliability and dependability of supply is unquestionably superior to foreign oil. Proven reserves now indicate our country has enough natural gas to serve us for more than 100 years.

In using natural gas as a fuel source, we can avoid national defense costs associated with insuring deliveries of foreign oil, while also saving money on daily fuel costs. The price of natural gas, on a gas-per-gallon-equivalent (GGE), is between \$1.50 and \$2.00. This is remarkable, even considering the additional cost of having a vehicle equipped with the capacity to utilize

natural gas as the fuel source. Most recently, Waste Management, Inc. made a determination to incrementally convert its fleet of garbage trucks to natural gas. For original equipment, the cost of a new truck increased by nearly \$30,000, but the estimated single-year savings on fuel costs was projected to be \$27,000. Over the life of the vehicle, Waste Management is set to achieve significant bottom-line savings and improve shareholder value.

What is a smart corporate decision to benefit shareholders can also be a smart decision for the State of West Virginia. That is why I have commissioned a task force of natural gas industry experts and state officials to help me devise a plan and strategy to transition major segments





Governor Tomblin examines a bi-converted engine, that runs on natural gas or unleaded gasoline, with Buzz Tabone of Zoresco Equipment Co., the company responsible for the engine conversion.

of the State of West Virginia's vehicular fleet to a natural gas-fueled model. This task force has been meeting throughout the state and has been evaluating the financial implications associated with conversion of the fleet and development of the necessary natural gas fueling station infrastructure for our fleet. It will analyze the infrastructure needs and logistical elements of establishing the same. It also will make recommendations on the state's motor vehicle fuel tax to reflect utilization of natural gas as a vehicular fuel, along with such legislation which may be needed to accomplish that objective. Finally, the task force will advise us on how to proceed with educating the general public on the attributes of conversion from gasoline and diesel to natural gas as a fuel.

The West Virginia Oil and Natural Gas Association recently joined me in announcing the 2013 Appalachian Basin Natural Gas Vehicle Expo and Conference.

The May event will transform the Charleston Civic Center into a showplace of what natural gas has done for the transportation industry, and what it can do in the future. Natural gas-powered vehicles from some of the world's largest manufacturers will be on hand. Cars and trucks that West Virginians drive every day will be there – but these special models will run on natural gas. Experts will be on hand during this three day event to advise private businesses, as well as cities and counties, on how to implement this natural resource for their transportation needs.

I look forward to attending the Expo, hearing the task force's recommendations and moving one step closer to using this valuable resource we have been blessed with, right here in West Virginia, today and in the future. ▽