

Fuel device isn't snake oil

Phoenix company shows product lowers pollution

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It's a product that sounds too good to be true: a device for diesel engines that reduces air pollution and optimizes fuel.

That's the promise made by Phoenix-based Emissions Technology Inc., the manufacturer of DC-100, an after-market product that helps fuel burn more completely.

Doug Hanchett reacted like any potential buyer.

"We didn't believe them. We figured they were full of baloney," said Hanchett, the vice president of operations for Tempe-based Western Organics. It wasn't the first time Hanchett had heard some spiel about how the latest fuel additive or gadget could help his gas-guzzling fleet.

But he agreed to let Emissions Technology try its DC-100 on an 800-horsepower tub grinder, which mulches "green waste," such as tree branches, near the Phoenix landfill. With the device installed in the air intake of the engine, the grinder used a third less fuel - results that Hanchett calls phenomenal. After the trial, Western Organics accessorized its entire fleet in Phoenix, which includes 20 pieces of equipment. On the way is a purchase order for a similar fleet in Albuquerque.

Each unit costs \$1,200 to \$2,000. A catalyst cartridge replacement is required every 400 hours of engine use.

The distributor hooked Hanchett and a handful of other Valley-based companies by showing, instead of just telling, how its combustion catalyst system reduces air pollution and saves fuel. Letting companies see results for themselves has been key to increased sales during the past three months, said Gordon Parry, president of Emissions Technology. He anticipates \$1 million in sales this year.

Debra Johnson, who handles distribution in Arizona and Mexico, said selling the product hasn't been easy.



John Severson/The Arizona Republic

Daniel Paredes of Emissions Products International checks out a DC-100 unit he had installed on a screen shaker at Western Organics in Phoenix.

"As wonderful as it is, it's just been such a long haul to get recognition and acceptance," said Johnson, president of Emissions Products International. "People associate it with snake oil. They've heard so many claims of people saying, 'Here's something that will improve fuel economy.' People are skeptical."

But the company is starting to win contracts with local companies, including Beeman Brothers Drilling Inc. and Arizona Materials. The product is also popular with the boating industry in the Carolinas and the water well and oil drilling industries in the Southeast, Pardy said. The company is also going after international sales.

Pardy said they could break into retail sales within six months, targeting high performance pickup trucks and recreational vehicles.

Emissions Technology is waiting for verification from the Environmental Protection Agency and the California Air Resources Board that says DC-100 helps diesel engines meet emission standards.

The verification is required to sell the product in California, but not in other states. Still, buyers are more likely to give a nod to the DC-100 once it's certified.

"The key thing that will help to accelerate the revenues is when we get verification," Pardy said, adding that reducing emissions is becoming increasingly important.

Hanchett, of Western Organics, echoes, "Emissions are a huge issue in our industry."

Scottsdale Unified School District was able to analyze DC-100's effect on emissions from buses, and measured decreases of 40 to 80 percent. But most companies measure the reduction by looking at the equipment and seeing less black smoke spit out.

To measure the savings in gas, Emissions Products International reviews companies' fuel records to determine how many gallons of fuel per hour are used by certain pieces of equipment.

The tub grinders at Western Organics were tested. The machine ran in cycles - 30 days with the DC-100, 30 days without. With the device, the tub grinder used 5.4 fewer gallons of gas per hour.

"People are recognizing that fuel is their one big variable cost and most people have seen it as a non-controllable cost in the past," Johnson said.

"We've given them an opportunity to control that. I think that's been catching on."