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## WHEELS & WINGS - FEBRUARY 2009

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FedFleet 2009 - *Winds of Change.*

Registration is open for Federal employees, visit: [www.fedfleet.org](http://www.fedfleet.org)

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### **Smithsonian Institution Improves Vehicle Utilization with Wireless Fleet Management from Networkfleet**

By Valerie Chereskin, Chereskin Communications

The Smithsonian Institution is recognized as the world's largest museum complex and research organization. Besides 19 museums, 9 research centers, and the National Zoo, it also operates a motor vehicle fleet of approximately 500 vehicles across the U.S. Most are used in facility management or security. Whether it is moving a priceless piece of artwork or transporting an exotic animal to the national zoo, the institution has numerous responsibilities.

Bill Griffiths, agency fleet manager, joined the Smithsonian from the U.S. Forest Service. While there he became acquainted with Networkfleet, a wireless fleet management system that continuously monitors both GPS location and engine diagnostics for each vehicle. When implementing the Smithsonian's new fleet management system (FleetWave), Griffiths wanted to integrate data from Networkfleet to improve equipment utilization, lower fuel costs, and reduce unscheduled maintenance.

"When I started at the Smithsonian, we didn't really have a way of keeping track of vehicles, and we needed to do more preventative maintenance," said Griffiths. "Networkfleet connects directly to the vehicle's engine computer. It sends an e-mail notification saying, for example, that the vehicle's transmission has a fault code. With this information, we can take action before it escalates into a bigger problem. This helps me curb some of the unscheduled maintenance we often have, especially with our law enforcement vehicles."

#### ***The Challenge***

Griffiths decided to perform utilization studies on his fleet to ensure that vehicles were used optimally and to help him manage his fleet more effectively. The utilization studies would examine vehicle usage, idle time, number of trips per day, routing, etc., to determine if every vehicle was needed and being used efficiently. To help him gather that information, he began a pilot program with Networkfleet in October 2007.

"One of the biggest challenges that fleet managers have is ensuring that their fleet is being utilized optimally. We wanted to know how many vehicles were going to the same location and where all the stops were so that we could consolidate trips and possibly reduce the number of vehicles we needed," continued Griffiths.

Unscheduled maintenance was a particularly big problem within the institution's law enforcement fleet. Law enforcement and security vehicles were driven hard and submitted to rough handling. In addition, long idle times by law enforcement was increasing vehicle wear and tear and wasting fuel.

#### ***The Solution***

To assist in obtaining information for his utilization studies, Griffiths selected the Networkfleet wireless fleet management system. Networkfleet's patented system reads real-time diagnostics from the vehicle's engine to allow Griffiths to continuously monitor precise information for each vehicle. It also immediately



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communicates the diagnostic trouble codes caused by vehicle malfunctions. Griffiths logs on to a secure Web page to view and manage information for each fleet vehicle and receives email alerts when vehicles exceed preset thresholds. The result is easily accessible information on a vehicle's location, stops, idling and mileage that can be quickly analyzed to yield benefits in efficiency and cost reductions.

### *The Results*

Networkfleet provided the Smithsonian with precise information such as exact fuel consumption, mileage, speed and idle time for each vehicle. By integrating Networkfleet information along with data from fuel cards into its fleet management system, the institution benefited from the real-time information on every vehicle in its fleet. With improved vehicle utilization, it was able to eliminate 12 three-quarter ton utility vehicles, costing \$25,000 each.

“Just checking idle time and how many start and stops we were having in a day helped in our utilization study, especially since we were trying to consolidate vehicles,” said Griffiths. “For example, we found that we had four or five vehicles assigned to one area, and they were all going to the same location. They were also idling the majority of the time. We determined that we could get some shared use out of these vehicles, which eventually allowed us to actually eliminate 12 full size vehicles.”

The Smithsonian also used the system to place geofences in certain geographical areas to pinpoint vehicles that venture in and out of those areas. This helped the institution track unauthorized vehicle usage and optimize routing. Griffiths feels the new system is a big win for the agency. “We not only reduced the size of our fleet, but we also reduced our petroleum consumption, which is mandated by the Federal Government. For us, that was a huge victory.”

Security vehicles are a high priority for the Institution, so it was important that they are maintained in good condition. By monitoring diagnostic trouble codes and odometer readings, the agency was able to reduce unscheduled maintenance by approximately 15 percent.

“From a fleet management standpoint, the system gives me peace of mind. It is another tool that that has helped me manage my fleet effectively,” continued Griffiths. “Real time data is so important when it comes to making sure that you have optimum preventive maintenance programs.”

The Smithsonian Institution has decided to equip every new vehicle purchased by the agency each year with Networkfleet. With the data provided by Networkfleet, it can now ensure that each vehicle is used effectively and is absolutely necessary to promote its mission of research around the world.

### **New ASTM Biodiesel Blend Specifications Now in Effect**

Specs for Finished Blends Help Facilitate Commerce for Biodiesel Industry

By Jenna Higgins Rose, Director of Communications, National Biodiesel Board

Biodiesel is reaching new heights as a proven fuel, bolstered by new quality specifications for biodiesel blends published by ASTM International. Biodiesel producers, petroleum companies, engine companies, vehicle manufacturers, pipeline operators, fleets and consumers will benefit from the new biodiesel blend



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specifications, using them for fuel preparation, quality checking, engine design, and bid and purchasing contracts.

ASTM International, one of the largest and most highly regarded standards development organizations in the world, has now officially published the highly anticipated biodiesel blend specifications on the ASTM website [www.astm.org](http://www.astm.org) for general use. The new biodiesel blend specifications include:

- **ASTM D975-08a, Specification for Diesel Fuel Oils** — used for on- and off-road diesel applications; revised to include requirements for up to 5 percent biodiesel.
- **ASTM D396-08b, Specification for Fuel Oils** — used for home heating and boiler applications; revised to include requirements for up to 5 percent biodiesel.
- **ASTM D7467-08, Specification for Diesel Fuel Oil, Biodiesel Blend (B6 to 20)** — a completely new specification that covers finished fuel blends of between 6 (B6) and 20 (B20) percent biodiesel for on- and off-road diesel engine use.

ASTM International also approved some updates to the existing ASTM standard for biodiesel, ASTM D6751, which is designed to control pure biodiesel (B100) product quality prior to blending with conventional diesel fuel.

The rigorous ASTM process yielded stringent specifications to help ensure the availability of high quality biodiesel blends in the marketplace.

Bob McCormick, Principal Engineer on Fuels Performance at the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL), said, “The new ASTM standards for biodiesel blends are the result of years of negotiation between the various parties at ASTM and years of research on how the properties of biodiesel blends affect engine performance. NREL has conducted extensive research over the past 4 years to support development of these standards, which we believe will lead to an expansion of markets for biodiesel while at the same time ensuring that users have trouble-free performance.”

This research was jointly supported by the U.S. Department of Energy and the National Biodiesel Board (NBB) under a Cooperative Research and Development Agreement. Some funding for NBB’s work was also provided by soybean farmers, through the soybean checkoff program.

The ASTM specifications provide details on requirements for fuel characteristics as well as the relevant standard test methods to use for each. The new biodiesel standards apply to all finished biodiesel blends, regardless of the type of feedstock used to make the fuel.

“These specifications combine the input of engine interests, petroleum interests, and biodiesel interests, as well as government and military representatives, researchers and academics,” said Steve Howell, Technical Director for the NBB and Chairman of the ASTM Biodiesel Task Force. “It took cooperation and a lot of data and information sharing between all those parties to reach consensus. This is an important achievement for the biodiesel industry that will help move us forward.”



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The official publication of the new biodiesel blend specifications is welcome news to automakers and engine manufacturers, who have been requesting a finished blend specification for B20 biodiesel blends for several years. Some companies, such as Chrysler LLC, had stated that the need for that spec was the single greatest hurdle preventing their full-scale acceptance of B20 use in their diesel vehicles. Chrysler was instrumental in working with the ASTM task force toward B20 specification development and approval, having supported fleet use of B20 in its Dodge Ram diesel pickups since January 2006.

Biodiesel is a domestically produced, renewable alternative to diesel fuel and can be made from plant oils, animal fats, recycled restaurant grease or new sources such as algae. Biodiesel blends up to B20 (20% biodiesel blended with 80% Ultra Low Sulfur Diesel) meeting ASTM specifications can be used in diesel engines with few or no modifications. All major automakers and engine manufacturers in the U.S. currently accept the use of at least B5, and 50 percent of U.S. manufacturers already accept the use of B20 blends or higher in at least some of their equipment. Several more companies are expected to raise their approvals to B20 now that the final ASTM specifications for B6-B20 blends have been approved and published.

For more information about biodiesel, including manufacturers' warranty positions for its use, visit [www.biodiesel.org](http://www.biodiesel.org).

### **If You Ever Thought Retreads Were The Cause Of Rubber On The Road, It's Time To Think Again!**

The NHTSA Commercial Medium Tire Debris Study is not news to the retread industry. (We knew it all the time!)

<http://www.retread.org/PDF/5579TireReport011409.pdf>

Please click on the image above to download the file (9.9MB)

If you are certain that tire debris on our highways (also known as rubber on the road or road alligators) is caused by retreads, you need to read the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) Commercial Medium Tire Debris Study just released. It is a 214 page document and should prove once and for all that the true cause of tire debris on our highways is NOT because of retreads.

The study contains a huge amount of important information about the true causes of tire debris, but it makes clear that retreads are not to blame!

For those who have a serious interest in the findings, see page 188 for the Overall Study Conclusions (10.4).

### **We knew it all the time, but it's nice to see that the federal government agrees with us!**

For more information about the economic and environmental benefits of retreaded tires, please call our toll free number from anywhere in North America 888-473-8732 or send an email to: [info@retread.org](mailto:info@retread.org). We will send you a complete **Retread Tire Information Packet**, which includes a **Retread Tire Buyers Guide**, along with a CD and two DVDs. Our materials are totally non-commercial and there is no cost.

The Tire Retread & Repair Information Bureau also offers retread plant tours for interested parties. Please contact us for more information about a retread plant tour in your area.

TRIB

TIRE RETREAD & REPAIR INFORMATION BUREAU



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### Federal Automotive Statistical Tool (FAST) Update

By [Ed Lawler](#)

The FAST system closed for 2008 data entry on December 15, 2008. The 2008 Federal Fleet Report was published and is accessible on the FAST log-in page (as of January 31) at [HTUhttps://fastweb.inel.gov/UTH](https://fastweb.inel.gov/UTH). You do not need to log in to see the Report.

Highlights: Total inventory is up a little, although acquisitions were down a little. Alternative fuel vehicle acquisitions were up a little. Fuel use was down slightly, about 1 percent, but miles traveled were up about 1 and a half percent. Finally, annual fleet cost increased a significant 15 percent, nearly all of it attributable to gas prices.

### Agency Policy Evaluation Program

By [Ed Lawler](#)

Last year within GSA/OGP a new Center for Policy Evaluation (CPE) began its work. The CPE designed a web-based tool for evaluating agencies' adherence to governmentwide regulations and best practices called the Policy Review Tool (PRT). This is an ongoing program and will be repeated in 2009. There is a new improved website that features: more drop-down choices so there's less typing involved; fewer questions to answer so it won't be so much work; clearer evaluation criteria so the scoring will make more sense. Visit [HUwww.gsa.gov/cpe](http://www.gsa.gov/cpe) for further information. Also download the official governmentwide report issued after last year's process: it's at [HUhttps://gsa.inl.gov/prt](https://gsa.inl.gov/prt). This report only came out in December and is reportedly getting some high-level attention

### EPA Tests Hydrogen Fuel Cell Vehicle under Real World Conditions

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Stephen L. Johnson showcased the fourth generation of Chevrolet's Equinox Fuel Cell Car, the newest addition to the agency's vehicle fleet. The new car underscores EPA's support for national efforts to develop clean energy technologies and help move the United States toward energy independence.



"EPA is turning the key on an engine of change, by turning fleet emissions from CO<sub>2</sub> to H<sub>2</sub>O," said EPA Administrator Stephen L. Johnson. "EPA supports new technologies such as hydrogen fuel cells that are good for our environment and good for our economy."



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The vehicle, the fourth generation Chevrolet Equinox Fuel Cell, is an electric car enabled by General Motors' advanced fuel cell propulsion system and is tested and engineered for 50,000 miles of driving life. With hydrogen as its only fuel, this vehicle emits no greenhouse gases and serves as an alternative to traditional, petroleum-dependent vehicles that emit carbon dioxide, nitrous oxide, and other air pollutants. Featuring the latest advancements in fuel cell technology, the vehicle can travel up to 150 miles per fill-up, and is expected to meet all applicable 2008 federal motor vehicle safety standards.

EPA has a six-month lease on the fuel cell vehicle, made possible with a grant provided by U.S. Department of Energy (DOE). Through their cooperation, the agencies hope to demonstrate the viability of fuel cell vehicles and encourage a shift in the American marketplace toward alternative fuels that can play a role in securing the nation's freedom and protecting its environment, as alternative fuel technology and infrastructure continue to develop in the future.

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HTU[For information on Greening EPA's Fleet, go to](#)UTH:

HTU[epa.gov/greeningepa/greenfleet/index.htm](http://epa.gov/greeningepa/greenfleet/index.htm)UTH

### 6BFederal Motor Vehicle Registration System (FMVRS) Launched

By [Karl Wolfe](#)

The Federal Motor Vehicle Registration System is now fully implemented to automatically create a vehicle record in your agency's FMVRS file whenever a vehicle is purchased through AutoChoice and automatically create a license plate record in your agency's FMVRS file whenever a U.S. Government vehicle license plate is ordered through UNICOR/Amerimac. The agency's responsibility is just to match the license plate record to the vehicle it was assigned to. It is also requested that the vehicle's POC and location information collected by FMVRS be reviewed and any needed corrections made immediately since FMVRS data is now available to law enforcement at local, state, and federal levels.

Vehicles and license plates purchased prior to Oct 1, 2008, and Vehicles acquired from a source other than AutoChoice will still need to be entered manually using either the FMVRS bulk upload template or the on-line "Add" facility in the "Vehicle Detail" screen in the FMVRS program.

**Reminder: Agencies are still responsible for bulk uploading their existing vehicle fleet into FMVRS as quickly as possible and for replacing old-style license plates with plates of the new design.**

### FedFleet Thank You

Last year, the Bob Baker Fleet Manager of the Year Award was revised. What were two became four awards: small fleet civilian agencies, large fleet civilian agencies, small military fleet, and large military fleet. The criteria on which the nominees will be judged have been better delineated.



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Several national fleet managers participated in the development of the award process. The four who put many hours into this process were Bill Griffiths, Smithsonian Institute; Steve Sosson, Treasury; Scotty Matrin, Fish and Wildlife; and Bernie Tewey, Social Security Administration.

The process is still evolving, but we want to thank these individuals for the solid launching!

### **Joint Planning and Development Office (JPDO) Launches NextGen Avionics Roadmap Version 1.0**

Source: Joint Planning and Development Office, FAA

The Joint Planning and Development Office (JPDO) Aircraft Working Group (WG) has developed the **NextGen Avionics Roadmap Version 1.0 (v1.0)**. The document is intended to communicate to the aviation community how the many proposed Next Generation Air Transportation System (NextGen) improvements correlate to aircraft capabilities and functions, and how these capabilities/functions evolve over time. This initial **Roadmap** is intended as a starting point and a first step to help focus the discussion and debate needed to grow consensus in the aviation community. It is a way to facilitate subsequent NextGen planning as it relates to improved aircraft capabilities and corresponding avionics. The **Roadmap** should not be viewed as a long-term NextGen planning source—that is the role of the JPDO's Integrated Work Plan (IWP) and the Concept of Operations (ConOps), as well as other government partners' specific planning documents such as the FAA's NextGen Implementation Plan.

Material for this **NextGen Avionics Roadmap v1.0** draws from NextGen planning sources (IWP, ConOps, the FAA's NextGen Implementation Plan, and the FAA's Performance-Based Navigation Roadmap) that capture how aircraft operations are expected to change through utilization of improved avionics. The **Roadmap** brings these many proposed changes together – into an aircraft perspective – so the aviation community can better understand the key avionics system changes for NextGen. The primary focus of this first version is improved air carrier and air transport operations through 2018 (NextGen mid-term), with some capabilities presented that broach the far-term time frame (2019 to 2025).

The **NextGen Avionics Roadmap v1.0** will evolve to address the needs of the broader user community (e.g., General Aviation, military, Unmanned Aerial Systems) and to fully characterize avionics system evolution through the far-term. Future efforts include the integration and alignment of the **Roadmap** into the foundational JPDO and partner agency planning documents, to allow for greater clarity on aircraft-and avionics-specific changes.

### **Senate Aviation Bill Would Mandate Safety Changes for EMS**

Source: Helicopter Association International (HAI)

S.1300 – Aviation Investment and Modernization Act of 2007 (Introduced in Senate)

Legislation, S.1300, has been introduced in the U. S. Senate to authorize appropriations for the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) for fiscal years 2008 through 2011 to improve safety and capacity and to modernize the air traffic control system. In addition to the issues previously discussed concerning user fees and surcharges and an increase in the fuel tax, S. 1300 also would mandate significant changes for helicopter emergency medical service operators.





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Section 508 of S.1300 would mandate compliance with Part 135 regulations whenever medical crews are on board, without regard to whether there are patients on board the helicopter. Within 60 days of the date of enactment of S. 1300, the FAA would be required to initiate rulemakings to create standardized checklists of risk evaluation factors and require helicopter EMS operators to use the checklist to determine whether a mission should be accepted. Additionally, the FAA would be required to complete a rulemaking to create standardized flight dispatch procedures for helicopter EMS operators and require operators to use those procedures for flights.

Any helicopter used for EMS operations that is ordered, purchased, or otherwise obtained after the date S. 1300 was enacted would also be required to have on board an operational terrain awareness and warning system (TAWS) that meets the technical specifications of section 135.154 of the Federal Aviation Regulation (14 C.F.C. 135.154).

To improve the data available to National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) investigators at crash sites, the FAA would also be required to complete a feasibility study of requiring flight data and cockpit voice recorders on new and existing helicopters used to EMS operations. Subsequent to the feasibility study, the FAA would be required within two years of S. 1300's enactment to complete a rulemaking requiring flight data and cockpit voice recorders on board such helicopters.

### Federal Aviation Awards – Call for Nominations

By [Mike Miles](#)

The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA), which sponsors the Interagency Committee for Aviation Policy (ICAP), is proud to announce the Ninth Annual Federal Aviation Awards to recognize and publicize excellence in Federal aviation during the period of January 1 - December 31, 2008. We are calling for nominations for the best Federal Aviation Programs (Large and Small Categories) and the best Federal Aviation Professionals (Managerial/Official Category and Operational/Support Category).

Federal agencies are encouraged to share how your management practices have made your aviation activities safer and more efficient and effective during 2008. Tell us how professional excellence in your flight program translated into success in carrying out your agency's mission. Let us know about your outstanding achievements in aircraft management/administration, operations, maintenance, training, and safety. Nominate your star performers in both managerial-level personnel and operational and support crew personnel.

Again this year, GSA will honor **one winner in each** of the following categories:

- Large Program (more than 20 aircraft and Commercial Aviation Services (CAS), as applicable);
- Small Program (20 or fewer aircraft and CAS, as applicable);
- Aviation Professional (Managerial/Official); and
- Aviation Professional (Operational/Support).

An independent panel of aviation experts will judge the entries. In partnership with the ICAP, GSA is committed to promoting continuous improvement in Federal aviation management. As always, the success of this awards program depends on your participation. We look forward to receiving your nominations by **May 1, 2009**. Remember, in order to nominate a program or individual for the Federal Aviation Award



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your agency must hold, or apply for and receive, the **Gold Standard Certificate** prior to May 1, 2009. The award recipients will be recognized at a ceremony during FedFleet 2009 in Chicago, Illinois.

### **The 9<sup>th</sup> National Motor Vehicle and Aviation Workshops and Exposition**

The Motor Vehicle Executive Committee, Interagency Committee for Aviation Policy, Federal Fleet Policy Council, GSA's Office of Governmentwide Policy, and GSA Fleet are proud to host FedFleet 2009, the 9<sup>th</sup> National Motor Vehicle and Aviation Workshops and Exposition. This prestigious conference will be held July 28 – 30 at the Sheraton Hotel & Towers and the Navy Pier located in Chicago, Illinois.

FedFleet 2009 will include the GSA Automotive Federal Vehicle Standards breakout sessions and vendor presentations. The agenda includes extensive Aviation Workshop sessions and an all-day Basic Fleet Management class. This comprehensive collection of fleet management, automotive procurement and aircraft related educational sessions truly make FedFleet 2009 a one-stop experience for Fleet and Aviation Management professionals.

We are confident that you'll find FedFleet 2009 a quality event and an excellent value for the nominal training and travel dollars involved.

Please visit our website: [www.fedfleet.org](http://www.fedfleet.org)

Please address your questions or comments concerning Wheels & Wings to the editors: [Elizabeth Allison](#) or [Jacquie Perry](#)