

MotorWeek Transcripts MotorNews 'H2 Energy IQ'

JESSICA SHEA CHOKSEY: Our Energy future is a critical challenge we face as a nation. With that comes the need for major changes on how we power our cars. So, with the likelihood that renewable hydrogen will be a part of that driving future, the question is changed from "...can it be done?" to "...when will it be done?"

With a \$1.2 billion dollar Presidential commitment for the Hydrogen Fuel Initiative, The U.S. Department of Energy, and its partners in government, industry and academia, including the national laboratories, is focusing on the potential of hydrogen technology for consumer transportation use.

Significant progress has already been made as we witnessed on the Washington, D.C. stop of the Hydrogen Road Tour. Sponsored by the DOE, U.S. Department of Transportation, California Fuel Cell partnership and National Hydrogen Association, the tour was a 13-day cross-country trip that gave Americans the chance to see what the future holds by demonstrating the progress towards commercially viable hydrogen and fuel cell powered vehicles.

The two-week green trek spanned 31 cities in 18 states, stretching from Maine to California. Making the journey were hydrogen concepts from BMW, Daimler, Ford, GM, Honda, Hyundai-Kia, Nissan, Toyota and Volkswagen. A few hydrogen transit buses made appearances at certain stops along the route.

Each stop provided the public and the media hands-on experience with hydrogen vehicles, as well as regional hydrogen-related programs. And because, few areas have hydrogen fueling stations available as of yet, the Tour brought along its own mobile hydrogen refueling station, which allowed people to experience how safe, easy and clean it is to fill a vehicle with hydrogen.

The National Hydrogen Road Tour literally drove alternative fuel education to the public – sending the message that hydrogen, along with biofuels, and hybrids, is one of many alternatives that must influence our future energy portfolio.

Elsewhere on the auto scene, shortly after pictures were prematurely leaked on the Internet – GM gave the world an official look at the production Chevrolet Volt. While this advanced plug-in hybrid has lost some of the concept's sleek lines, it still looks quite futuristic. The Volt is designed to go 40 miles on electric power alone.

We'll have more details on the Volt soon. And that's it for this week's MotorNews.