

# State launches clean air coalition

■ Goal is to push use of alternative fueled vehicles.

## By JODY RECORD

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**DURHAM** — Don't hold the fat. New Hampshire can use the grease.

Reused restaurant fat was just one of the alternative fuels discussed during the official designation of the Granite State Clean Cities Coalition at a ceremony held at the University of New Hampshire yesterday.

The coalition, launched by the state Department of Environmental Services and the Governor's Office of Energy and Community Services, joins more than 4,700 such organizations across the country dedicated to fostering the use of alternative fueled vehicles.

Doing so will help improve New Hampshire's air quality while reducing dependence on foreign oil, proponents contend. To that end, more than 40 Granite State stakeholders are partnering to increase the use of AFVs.

That's AFVs, not SUVs.

"Our role is not only to increase the number of AFVs on the road but we have some education to do," said MaryAnn Manooch, director for the Governor's Office of Energy and Community Services. "My own sister drives one of those big SUVs."

As members of the coalition, stakeholders vow to convert as many vehicles in their fleets, if possible, to alternative fuel and to support related legislation.

Currently, the state has 77 AFVs on the road using a combination of natural gas, propane, electricity and biodiesel fuel. On display outside the New Englander Center where the event was held, was the "Bio Car" built by a group of honors students at Moultonborough Academy. The 1980 Duster runs on biodiesel fuel made from used restaurant oil.

The honors biology class students won the Future Car Congress Student Challenge and leave today for a five-day trip to Washington, D.C., to attend the car congress.

First-year teacher David Severance, a former attorney, said the project came about during a discussion on fatty acids.

"One thing led to another and then we got talking about the guy who drove a car across the country that ran on garbage," Severance said. "The kids figured if that worked, they could do it, too."

UNH President Joan Leitzel, in one of her last acts before retiring at the end of this month, announced a \$1 million grant secured by the Granite State Clean Coalitions for UNH to build a compressed gas refueling station by 2003.

Reading from a letter written by U.S. Sen. Bob Smith, state Sen. Russell Prescott told the audience how Smith, as ranking member of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, had obtained a \$1.5 million grant last year for the university's Wildcat Transit system to purchase new buses that run on natural gas.

Also in attendance yesterday was Manchester Mayor Robert A. Baines, the first New Hampshire mayor to join the coalition.

Joking that he had left Manchester early in the morning on a Segway, Baines described his city as one that is struggling with mass transit.

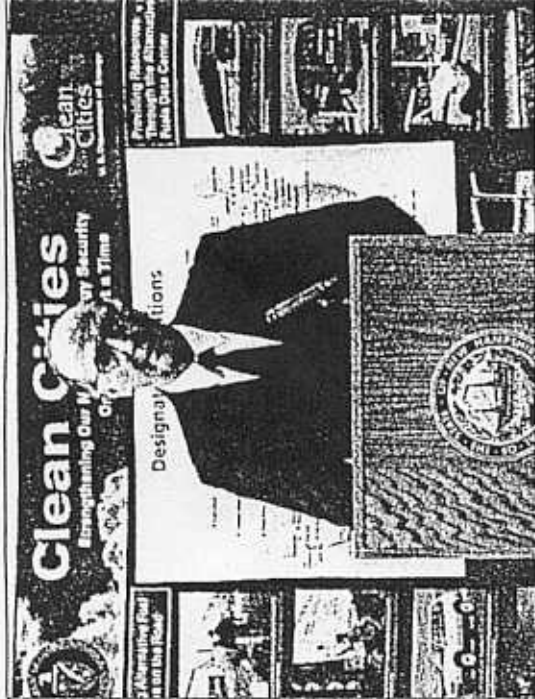
"Manchester is poised to work with the state and everyone else involved to help solve the mass transit problem," Baines said. "By being part of the coalition, the city will have access to people with the expertise that we need."

Thomas Gross from the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy at the U.S. Department of Energy, traveled from Washington to attend the designation ceremony. He lauded a group of women who also made the trip — in a natural gas-fired Civic GX.

"I'm pleased to be here with all you revolutionaries," Gross said. "It's great to be with people who are getting the job done — to be where, literally, the rubber meets the road."

Gross stressed the importance of energy security, saying that two-thirds of the 10 million gallons of oil imported by the U.S. daily goes to transportation and that Saudi Arabia and Iraq are in the top three countries on for fuel.

"That's no energy security," Gross said. "Energy security is another reason to support alternative fuels."



Jody Record Photo

Manchester Mayor Robert A. Baines, the first New Hampshire mayor to join the Granite State Clean Cities Coalition, speaks to a coalition gathering in Concord yesterday. The coalition, launched by the state Department of Environmental Services and the Governor's Office of Energy and Community Services, joins more than 4,700 such organizations across the country dedicated to fostering the use of alternative fueled vehicles.