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Newsfronts

IMPCO Celebrates 50th Year, Launches U.S. Production

Fuel Systems Solutions Inc. began manufacturing its alternative fuel solutions for the North American transportation market with the launch of its Automotive Alternative Fuel Division on Feb. 6. A grand opening was held at the headquarters of its U.S. subsidiary, IMPCO Technologies (Santa Ana, Calif.), which is celebrating its 50th year in the industrial market.

Founded in 1958, IMPCO developed the "clean air car" used to promote propane as a motor fuel by the Western Liquefied Gas Association, now the Western Propane Gas Association, and the former National LP-Gas Association. Today, the company is a world leader in the manufacturing and marketing of products and systems that allow transportation and industrial engines to operate on cleaner-burning gaseous fuels such as propane and natural gas.

The launch expands Fuel Systems Solutions' global distribution of transportation products. Its subsidiary, BRC (Cherasco, Italy), has been converting gasoline vehicles to run on natural gas or propane since the 1960s, and in 2008 increased production to approximately 800,000 vehicle conversions annually.

"Our technology and U.S. manufacturing facility provides Fuel Systems a strong and unique base to enter the U.S. automotive market," said company president Matthew Beale. "As part of our long-term growth strategy, we will begin by serving U.S. automotive fleets as they can quickly build the infrastructure necessary to fuel their vehicles, as well as achieve significant cost savings and emission benefits by converting their gasoline vehicles to run on our proven solution.

"The next step will be to replicate our original equipment manufacturers [OEM] and delayed-OEM model to distribute to U.S. consumers. We are positioned to be a leader as the U.S. market evolves, and we continue to believe there is a significant opportunity world-wide for alternative gaseous fuel vehicles," said Beale.

Fuel Systems Solutions CEO Mario Costamagna adds, "We will bring our technology to the U.S. at a time when our country is focused on decreasing its dependence on foreign oil and greenhouse gas emissions. Our bi-fuel vapor sequential fuel injection systems enable the use of two fuels in one vehicle, which extends the driving range of the alternative fuel vehicle while protecting against refueling infrastructure shortfalls as the nation invests in infrastructure to allow U.S. consumers greater access to natural gas and propane," said Costamagna. "In this way, we deliver an immediate solution to aid in reducing harmful pollution and greenhouse gas emissions."

Tim Standke, director of automotive operations for IMPCO, pointed out the employment and economic benefits of implementing the alternative fuel systems technology, as it is focused on installation and execution on a national basis. He also said that since the technology is already available for many new and existing vehicles, the time to market is greatly expedited.