

PROPANE AUTOGAS MEETS SANDY SPRINGS POLICE DEPARTMENT'S LONG LIST OF REQUIREMENTS

A PROPANE CASE STUDY

The Sandy Springs Police Department was created shortly after the city of Sandy Springs, Georgia, was incorporated in December 2005. The department took over police operations from Fulton County in the summer of 2006, and currently employs 127 sworn officers.



RESEARCHING RESILIENCY IN ALTERNATIVE FUELS

In his former role as lieutenant commander of homeland security, Captain Bart Humble first started exploring alternative fuels after being asked to find a domestic fuel source that the city could rely on in the case of a disaster.

“The homeland security unit works to mitigate the effects of incidents and reduce harm to the environment,” said Capt. Humble. “Protecting our land isn’t limited to disaster response, but includes considering our economic and environmental impact on a day-to-day basis.”

According to Capt. Humble, after doing the research, propane autogas quickly rose to the top of his list. “Propane autogas is clean and American-made, and was more affordable to implement than other alternative fuels — we wouldn’t have to sacrifice anything we were looking for out of an alt fuel,” he said.

Finding the right fuel was the easy part; the more difficult task was getting buy-in from multiple stakeholders, including city council members, the police department’s middle management and line-level supervisors, and the city’s police officers.

“In order to get the go-ahead, I really had to have my ducks in a row,” Humble said. “I completed a full cost analysis showing return on investment, and presented a strong business case for propane autogas to the city council.”

PROPANE AUTOGAS PLEASURES ALL PARTIES

While the cost analysis was a strong selling point, Humble said that Sandy Springs’ city council was equally motivated by the opportunity for the police department to become a leader in the community and creating a sustainable future. The community has an established history in preservation

COMPANY

Sandy Springs Police Department
Sandy Springs, Georgia

CHALLENGE & SOLUTION

Sandy Springs’ city council, police force, and homeland security units all wanted the police department to transition to alternative fuels for varying reasons: to reduce dependence on foreign oil, save money, and reduce environmental impacts. Propane autogas emerged as the perfect solution to meet these varying needs.

RESULT

- Clean, American-made propane autogas helps the police department meet the needs of multiple entities throughout the city.
- Sandy Springs has displaced approximately 167 tons of harmful greenhouse gas emissions since 2012.
- The police department has recouped its upfront costs and saved more than \$200,000 in fuel costs in just two years.



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of natural resources, and the city works conscientiously in pursuing environmentally sound initiatives.

Propane autogas is an approved alternative fuel under the Clean Air Act, and vehicles running on the fuel emit fewer greenhouse gas emissions than comparable gasoline and diesel models.

"It's definitely a challenge to find sustainable solutions without significantly increasing operational costs," Humble said. "But propane autogas gave us the perfect green-green solution, with a low total cost-of-ownership and a low level of environmental impact."

For middle management and officers operating the vehicles daily, safety, reliability, and performance were their biggest concerns.

"Once I provided the facts, it basically squashed any apprehensions the officers may have had," Humble said. "Propane autogas is less flammable than gasoline, and propane autogas tanks are 20 times more puncture-resistant. The officers got behind the wheel and had nothing but positive feedback."

With homeland security, the city council, and officers in the field on board with the concept, Sandy Springs gave propane autogas the sign-off and converted 25 Ford Crown Victoria cruisers from gasoline to propane autogas with EPA-certified Prins bi-fuel systems in 2012. The success of those vehicles spurred Humble to apply for a grant to convert additional vehicles through the Southeast Propane Autogas Development Program, administered by Virginia Clean Cities.

DRIVING DOWN TOTAL COST-OF-OWNERSHIP

"For law enforcement agencies, grants can be extremely valuable in cutting upfront costs, and can play a huge role in a fleet's decision to convert to an alternative fuel," Humble said. The SPADP grant reimbursed Sandy Springs Police Department for 50 percent of the total cost to convert 40 more vehicles, including Crown Victorias, Caprices, and Expeditions. As part of the grant, the original 25 conversions were also amended.

Sandy Springs Police Department has since added two dedicated propane autogas vehicles to its fleet, and currently operates a total of 67 propane autogas-powered vehicles. Capt. Humble reports that the department is already seeing a return on its investment.

"Our police fleet operates on propane autogas more than 90 percent of the time, displacing thousands of gallons of gasoline each month," Humble said. "Based on the gallons of gasoline we've replaced with propane autogas, in



only two years' time we have displaced about 167 tons of harmful greenhouse gas emissions and saved more than \$200,000 in fuel costs."

On top of savings from grants, Sandy Springs Police Department works with its propane retailers to lock in fuel costs. The department's contract ensures at least a dollar per gallon savings compared with gasoline, and the department reports saving much more than that on average due to gasoline's fluctuating prices.

POSITIVE PROPANE AUTOGAS EXPERIENCE

Humble anticipates the department will continue to convert vehicles to propane autogas, and recommends other government agencies, cities, and police departments looking for ways to trim costs while also helping improve their communities and environment to consider propane autogas.

"Getting buy-in from so many different parties isn't an easy feat. However, propane autogas has shown consistent cost-savings, dependable performance, and is a clean fuel," Humble said. "The bottom line is that propane autogas is a reliable fuel source, and I'd encourage any police fleet in a similar situation to adopt propane autogas-powered vehicles."

The Propane Education & Research Council offers several tools and resources for fleets considering a switch to propane autogas, including a new Propane Autogas Cost Calculator. To see what your ROI could be with propane autogas, visit propanecostcalculator.com/autogas.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

To learn more about propane autogas and the Propane Education & Research Council, visit propane.com.

For more information about the Sandy Springs Police Department, visit sandysprings.org.

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The Propane Education & Research Council was authorized by the U.S. Congress with the passage of Public Law 104-284, the Propane Education and Research Act (PERA), signed into law on October 11, 1996. The mission of the Propane Education & Research Council is to promote the safe, efficient use of odorized propane gas as a preferred energy source.