

CASE STUDY: JACKSON COUNTY

BACKGROUND

Stan Evans, Sheriff of Jackson County, Georgia for the past 26 years, was familiar with propane from his days in the farming business, but didn't know it could be used as an alternative fuel in vehicles. When gasoline prices spiked in 2008 and hurricane activity threatened to interrupt fuel supply, he began researching cost-saving alternative fuels and quickly identified propane autogas as the best fit for his fleet.

THE PROGRAM

Jackson County worked with Force 911 of Georgia to convert four vehicles to run on propane autogas, using the Prins VSI system from Alliance AutoGas founding partner, American Alternative Fuel. After three years, what began as an experiment with just four squad cars running on autogas has expanded to include well over half of the Sheriff's vehicle fleet. Now with 60 autogas-powered vehicles, the Sheriff's office saves over \$110,000 annually – savings Evans estimates will only increase in the coming months (this does not include currently available federal tax credits).

As is the case with many law enforcement offices, the bi-fuel component of the Prins system was critical to the department's ability to operate alternative fuel vehicles. They run entirely on autogas whenever possible, but knowing that the engine automatically switches to gasoline in the event they cannot reach an autogas fueling station provides peace of mind.

WORKING WITH ALLIANCE AUTOGAS

Jackson County recently contracted the fueling services of Alliance AutoGas founding partner, Blossman Gas. Sheriff Evans cites their safety support and knowledge of autogas use as "beyond comparison." Working with Blossman afforded the department another level of comfort, based on their extensive knowledge and understanding of the fuel and the conversion systems. Sheriff Evans considers Alliance AutoGas "tops in their field." Sheriff Evans continued:

*We had a great need for additional training of our staff and our patrol officers – a need to better understand how the system worked and the best practices for dispensing autogas into the vehicle itself. There were a lot of areas we needed to address that we weren't addressing. Alliance AutoGas (Blossman and American Alternative Fuel) provided an overwhelming response to our needs. **They were on the ball, and their knowledge and training were outstanding.***

Since we've teamed with them, they've been with us every step of the way, offering their expertise and advice — and working to make the program a successful endeavor for everyone involved. Their assistance has been exceptional and we've really enjoyed working with them.

Alliance AutoGas provides Sheriff fleets like Jackson County with a turnkey solution of vehicle conversion, onsite fueling, ongoing safety training and technical support.



Sheriff Stan Evans
Jackson County, Georgia

FLEET STATISTICS

FLEET TYPE:

Law Enforcement

PERCENT OF FLEET RUNNING ON AUTOGAS: 66%

AUTOGAS VEHICLES IN FLEET:

60 (58 Ford Crown Victorias; 2 pick-up trucks)

ADDITIONAL VEHICLES SLATED FOR AUTOGAS CONVERSION:

20

ANNUAL COST SAVINGS:

\$110,000 - \$145,000

With autogas use versus gasoline gallon equivalent

ANTICIPATED ANNUAL USAGE

(gallons propane autogas):

120,000- 140,000

AUTOGAS FUELING:

Onsite autogas fueling infrastructure including 18,000-gallon autogas tank.

TIME OPERATING ON AUTOGAS:

3 years

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RESULTS AND AUTOGAS BENEFITS

Following the conversions of their first four autogas-powered cruisers, the department liked what they saw and began expanding their program. They are saving tax-payer dollars by reducing fuel costs more than 30 percent, and as their autogas fleet continues to grow, so do their fuel cost savings. Current cost savings for the Sheriff's office are estimated at \$110,000 with 60 vehicles and expected to increase to at least \$145,000 with the additional 20 vehicles slated for conversion this year.

Beyond cost savings, Evans objected to "sending all our money overseas," and was eager to contribute to our national energy security with American-made autogas. "I felt we needed to do our part to keep our money here at home, contributing in a small way by not buying foreign oil – and propane autogas was a great alternative."

The Sheriff also praised the positive environmental impact of a cleaner-burning fuel, including a 20 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. Additionally, the team at Jackson County believes the high octane rating of clean-burning autogas will result in extended engine life.

Jackson County deputies are pleased with the performance of the autogas vehicles. Sheriff Evans notes that autogas is as safe as gasoline if handled properly.

MOVING FORWARD

Now, with 60 of 90 fleet vehicles running on autogas, the Sheriff's office plans to convert 20 additional vehicles this year.

"I think it's a worthy endeavor on the part of Sheriffs' offices, and smart people will be looking to the use of autogas more and more in the coming years," says Evans. "Price and supply will dictate it." Evans would like to see more people utilizing alternative fuels like autogas, including car manufacturers. With the savings and environmental benefits associated with autogas, the Jackson County department expects to see significant growth in the fuel's use.

"There's only one way for this to go, and it's up," says the Sheriff. "When you can burn propane autogas as safely and cost effectively, why would you ever want to spend money on a gallon of gasoline?"