

Agencies, Car Dealer Receive Alternative Fuels Awards

Three state offices and a leading Oklahoma automotive dealership are recipients of the 2012 Zach D. Taylor Jr. Clean Cities Vision Awards for Regional Alternative Transportation Fuels Leadership. The awards were announced at the 11th Annual Central Oklahoma Clean Cities Awards Luncheon earlier this month at the Petroleum Club in downtown Oklahoma City.

The awards honor outstanding efforts to reduce dependence on imported petroleum, improve air quality, strengthen the local economy and enhance public awareness of alternative fuels and advanced vehicle technologies.

Jim Roth, chairman of the Alternative “Green” Energy practice group at the Phillips Murrah P.C. law firm, presented the keynote address. Roth discussed Oklahoma’s bountiful natural resources and its past, present and future as an energy producing state.

Alison Taylor, senior vice president, Middle Market Banking, at Chase Bank emceed the event, and Yvonne Anderson, special programs officer in charge of alternative fuels initiatives and Central Oklahoma Clean Cities coordinator at the Association of Central Oklahoma Governments, presented the awards.

Receiving the 2012 Zach D. Taylor Jr. Clean Cities Vision Award in the Public Sector category were the Office of the Oklahoma Secretary of Energy, the Oklahoma Office of Management and Enterprise Services Central Purchasing Division and the Oklahoma Office of Management and Enterprise Services Fleet Management Division.

Carter Chevrolet Agency Inc. and affiliate OEM Systems LLC received the 2012 Zach D. Taylor Jr. Clean Cities Vision Award

in the Private Sector category.

The state offices were honored for their collaborative work in developing the nation's first multi-state, original equipment manufacturer, natural gas vehicle procurement. The endeavor was in response to objectives and strategies outlined in the Gov. Mary Fallin's Oklahoma First Energy Plan. The plan calls for Oklahoma to lead a coordinated effort between states to reach a tipping point for OEM production of functional and affordable natural gas vehicles. It also calls for a strategic expansion of compressed natural gas and electric vehicle fueling and charging infrastructure.

Countless hours of interagency teamwork went into the development of the multi-state request for proposal followed by conference calls and meetings with state purchasing departments across the country, an introductory meeting for potential vendors and an online process for questions and answers. When the solicitation closed in September, agency personnel began assessing proposals. In October, Oklahoma and 27 other states awarded contracts for dedicated and bi-fuel natural gas cars, trucks and vans that cut the pre-solicitation cost differential of these vehicles by as much as 50 percent in some cases.

Accepting the 2012 Zach D. Taylor, Jr. Clean Cities Vision Award for Public Sector Alternative Transportation Fuels Leadership were Oklahoma Secretary of Energy C. Michael Ming; Oklahoma Deputy Secretary of Energy Jay Albert and Maressa Treat, administrative and legislative liaison for the Office of the Oklahoma Office of the Secretary of Energy. Accepting for the state's Central Purchasing Division were Purchasing Director Scott Schlotthauer, and Laura Bybee, state purchasing officer. And, accepting the award from the state's Fleet Management Division were Terry Zuniga, fleet director; Tom Bogdanowicz, deputy fleet director, and Peggy Beaty, Alternative Fuels Program administrator.

Carter Chevrolet Agency Inc. and its OEM Systems LLC affiliate were commended in February 2012 by Gov. Fallin in recognition of the company's 2,000th natural gas vehicle conversion. OEM Systems LLC is recognized worldwide as a manufacturer and upfitter of van interior packages, truck equipment, ground support equipment, delivery vehicles, tactical vehicles, fire apparatus, transportation equipment and police and emergency rescue vehicles. In the fall of 2007, the company added compressed natural gas conversions to its vehicle upfitting services. Two years later the company had 400 CNG vehicle conversions under its belt and will surpass 3,000 CNG conversions as it enters 2013.

Carter Chevrolet, a General Motors sales leader, celebrated another OEM Systems success in October of this year. Ford Motor Company certified OEM Systems as a gaseous fuel Qualified Vehicle Modifier. This designation means Ford Motor Company successfully evaluated OEM Systems and its EPA-certified natural gas conversion equipment manufacturers on criteria such as engineering, the manufacturing process, quality control and adherence to Ford guidelines. More specifically, OEM Systems passed compliance with Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards, conformance with Ford industry guidelines for vehicle conversion, facility inspection and review and commitment to continuous improvement. It also means new Ford vehicles modified by OEM Systems to operate on compressed natural gas maintain their original engine and powertrain warranties.

Carter Chevrolet Agency Inc. and OEM Systems LLC, an Oklahoma family owned business enterprise, is one of the largest volume natural gas vehicle conversion companies in North America.

Accepting the 2012 Zach D. Taylor, Jr. Clean Cities Vision Award in the Private Sector category on behalf of Carter Chevrolet and OEM Systems were Judith Carter, Lisha Oshman, John Luber, Taren and Randy Robinson, Blake Burge and Chad Kisinger.

The Central Oklahoma Clean Cities coalition is one of nearly 90 public-private partnerships in major U.S. cities affiliated with the Department of Energy's Vehicle Technologies Program. The mission of the coalitions is to reduce dependence on petroleum in the transportation sector, develop regional economic opportunities, and improve air quality. To find out more about the Clean Cities program, go to www.eere.energy.gov/cleancities. Learn more about the Central Oklahoma Clean Cities Coalition at www.okcleancities.org.