

Alternative fuel fires up students

BY CHARLOTTE KEENAN
Staff Reporter

Bulldog Biodiesel is busy processing its third batch of biodiesel while also seeking to fuel community interest and involvement in its environmentally friendly cause.

The group recently purchased the BioPro 190, a biodiesel processor with an \$8,000 price tag, from Nebraska BioPro in Lincoln, Neb. Bulldog Biodiesel now is chartering with Truman's Center for Student Involvement and applying for more funding to pay for equipment and community education.

The biodiesel project has received \$4,000 from the agricultural science department, \$4,000 from the University farm and \$2,000 from the Department of Interdisciplinary Studies, said Barbara Kramer, associate professor of chemistry and an adviser to Bulldog Biodiesel.

Kramer and Thomas Marshall, associate professor of agricultural science, both advise the group and have applied for a grant of about \$30,000 from the Missouri Department of Natural Resources on its behalf, Kramer said. She said Bulldog Biodiesel will know the results of the grant application in May or June.

"We can't start using the money that we'd get from [the grant] until July," she said. "So hopefully we'll be able to get [the money], so we'll be able to keep what we've got right now going for a little longer."

Kramer said the DNR grant money would pay for educational outreach, student workers, another biodiesel processor, supplies and equipment for processing and analyzing the biodiesel. She said Bulldog Biodiesel will continue to seek further funding.

"Hopefully, once we've produced the biodiesel and are able to sell it to the farm and the other groups on campus, we'll recoup the money and keep going with it," Kramer said. "But we also need some more funding to help students who are running the equipment and things like that so that it's not all volunteer [work]."

Bulldog Biodiesel is following the lead of major universities that have initiated similar programs, said senior Pat Blomme, a member of Bulldog Biodiesel.

"There's a tremendous opportunity to use vegetable oil from Truman that no one's taking action on right now," he said.

Bulldog Biodiesel formed in fall 2007 when six members of the agriculture practicum made plans and began collaborating with Truman's



Photo Submitted
Bulldog Biodiesel members seniors Drew Olson (left)9, Ryan Kiel, Mike Doorack, Pat Blomme and junior Bryce Harken gather around their biodiesel processor. The group currently is trying garner support and funds for their alternative fuel project.

chapter of Student Affiliates of the American Chemical Society to create a business that would make biodiesel from vegetable oil to fuel University vehicles, Blomme said.

Bulldog Biodiesel first hopes to fuel University farm tractors and pickups and then expand to provide alternative fuel for all University vehicles, he said.

Rather than sell the alternative fuel, Bulldog Biodiesel will credit the biodiesel to the University in exchange for program costs, said senior Drew Olson, a Bulldog Biodiesel coordinator.

"The goal of Bulldog Biodiesel is essentially to use waste grease from the community and the University to remove Truman State University off of petroleum," Olson said.

Olson coordinates the agriculture side of the biodiesel project, which includes establishing the program, making the biodiesel, collecting oil and building a room to house the whole operation in the Animal Health and Science building.

He said the room's temperature-controlled environment should diminish problems the group has encountered with its first batches of biodiesel.

"Biodiesel just inherently does not like cold

temperatures," he said. "Essentially, the warmer the oil is, the better things separate out [and] the better the reaction goes."

The BioPro 190 requires 50 gallons of vegetable oil to make 50 gallons of biodiesel in 48 hours, Olson said. He said Bulldog Biodiesel someday will expand oil collection efforts to other community businesses and the University cafeterias.

But for now the project uses vegetable oil collected from the Dukum Inn, Olson said.

"The Dukum has the best oil I've ever seen," he said.

Senior Josh Hirner said he represents the chemistry side of Bulldog Biodiesel, which typically involves lab workers testing the quality of the oil used to make biodiesel and also analyzing the biodiesel once it's made.

"In the process of cooking with it, some of the oil gets broken down into these fatty acids," Hirner said. "And those can cause our [biodiesel production] process to run amok a little bit."

Hirner said he currently is focused on submitting the group's constitution and appropriate paperwork to the Center for Student Involvement.

"My main project recently has been working with the CSI and jumping through hoops that we need to jump through in order to become official," he said.

Both Hirner and Olson said Bulldog Biodiesel is working to increase its campus visibility this semester through workshops and Earth Week activities.

"The goal of Bulldog Biodiesel is essentially to use waste grease from the community and the University to remove Truman State University off of petroleum."

Drew Olson
Senior

Tax filing program aids campus, town

Students offer free service to community, gain practical experience

BY ALEX HALFMANN
for the Index

Students and members of the Kirksville community can cash in on Beta Alpha Psi's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program.

VITA is aimed at helping lower-income members of the Kirksville community and University students with their tax returns and provide service learning for Truman's accounting students.

"It's a great opportunity to help the community," said senior Nick Segbers, vice president of community service for Beta Alpha Psi. "People can come in and get their taxes done for free, where it could cost them a couple hundred dollars to do it somewhere."

VITA was instituted by the Internal Revenue Service in 1975 and is offered at schools, libraries, community centers and other public locations nationwide.

The program began Feb. 23 and has sessions from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. March 1 and 29 in Violette Hall 1424.

VITA caps the maximum gross income for the returns at \$40,000. Segbers said anything more than that can get complicated and that the volunteers advise those persons to seek a professional.

Smaller incomes have a tendency to be simpler, providing a learning experience and a great addition to a résumé for the volunteers, he said.

"It's really great for these students to do this because it's real world experience to file these tax forms and most are going into accounting and some point in their career they are going to have to know how to do this," Segbers said. "It looks great on the résumés for the people who want to hire you."

Segbers said the volunteers spend an average of an hour on each client.

He said some student forms are simple and can take less than half an hour. Some complex forms with two earners may take an hour and a half to two hours.

"[VITA] is a really big part of what Beta Alpha Psi does, and we emphasize this a lot when we recruit our members and advertise our organization," Segbers said.

Beta Alpha Psi completed 201 returns last year and filed 63 this past Saturday.

Alan Davis, associate professor of accounting and Beta Alpha Psi faculty adviser, said about 60 percent of the clients are community members and about 40 percent are students.

Davis said a large portion of the students who come are international students. VITA might be the only place in Kirksville for the

international students to file their taxes, he said.

"The United States has tax treaties with 50 different countries, and you have to know what the treaty provisions are and each treaty has different provisions," Davis said.

Davis said he leads training for all the student volunteers, who must pass a two-stage training course.

The first stage entails a pair of two-hour training sessions in which the students learn the law, and the second stage is a self-paced program during which the students learn the software used for tax returns.

Finally, the volunteers must pass a test to be approved by the IRS. To ensure the return is correct, all returns are reviewed by a graduate student and then again by Davis.

This year there are 80 student volunteers compared to 66 last year, and student volunteers can apply to have VITA show up on their co-curricular record as a service learning advantage.

Senior Kyle Dodwell said he

filed his taxes with VITA on Saturday for the second year in a row.

"I know how to do my own taxes, but it's free, and I would say that's the best part about it,"

Dodwell said. "It's a medium so you don't have to pay for any software but you still get your return done. Turbo Tax costs about \$60, and to pay for upgrades it would cost me \$80, ... and for me, that's \$80 I don't want to spend."

Dodwell said he filed as a dependent and had a simple form. He said filing his taxes took about 20 minutes.

"I would definitely recommend it to anyone no matter what you do," Dodwell said. "It's an excellent service that they are providing free of charge so no one really has an excuse not to go."

Davis said VITA

benefits every party involved.

"It's a good thing for the student volunteers that they get to do service learning and get to apply what they know and it's a good community service for the client," Davis said. "It's a win-win situation."

"It's really great for these students to do this because it's real-world experience to file these tax forms, and most are going into accounting and some point in their career, they are going to have to know how to do this."

Nick Segbers
Senior

NEWS | In Brief

Rep. McClanahan seeks re-election

State Rep. Rebecca McClanahan, D-Kirksville, filed for re-election to Missouri's 2nd District State Representative's seat Tuesday, according to a press release from Tuesday.

McClanahan, a former Truman faculty member, currently serves on three committees in the Missouri House of Representatives: Agriculture Policy, Higher Education and Appropriations for Health, Mental Health and Social Services.

She has represented the 2nd District, which includes Adair County, Putnam County and a portion of Sullivan County, since 2006, also according to the release.

Truman ranks high in Recyclemania

The University currently ranks fifth in the overall Per Capita Classic portion of Recyclemania, according to a press release from Monday.

The contest, which lasts for 10 weeks, currently is in its third week.

Recyclemania is an annual competition among the recycling programs at American universities.

Police seek four behind bad checks

Four individuals are wanted on felony warrants for passing more than \$4,500 in bad checks to area businesses, according to a Tuesday press release from Adair County prosecutor Mark Williams.

Area law enforcement agencies are looking for Tori and Chad Hill of Green City, Mo., and Amy and Billy Ebarb of Greencastle, Mo.

Anyone with any information on the whereabouts of these individuals should contact a local law enforcement agency, according to the release.

Vandals damage WCS exit signs

Seven exit signs and some wireless routers between the third and fourth floors of West Campus Suites were destroyed last weekend, according to an e-mail from WCS Hall Director Jimmy French.

The vandals responsible for the damage remain unknown and a cash reward is being offered for anyone with any information about the incident, French said.

The total cost of the damage to the signs is \$350. The cost of damage to the routers was unavailable.

Student Senate | In Brief

- Senate passed a money motion for \$50 to be spent on Alpha Sigma Gamma's Run/Walk Event.
- Senator freshman JoEllen Flanagan was appointed as a representative to the Undergraduate Council.
- Senate passed a textbook transparency resolution, which states that Student Senate formally endorses HB 2048, a bill that would require that students be made aware of revisions to a new edition of a textbook, that financial aid can be used to purchase textbooks and that book salesmen provide professors with information about book prices.
- Senator sophomore Lizz Esfeld gave a first reading of a Service Learning Resolution, which would make students aware of what courses are service learning courses and would develop a way to note that on students' transcripts.
- Senate passed a money motion for \$24.60 to be spent on stamps for mailings that would help Senate create an online rental property database for Kirksville.
- Senate discussed campus safety, and what students might serve as representatives on Truman's campus safety committee. Senate discussed including representatives from the Residence Hall Association and Student Senate in addition to an off-campus representative, a Student Adviser and a student at-large.
- Senate discussed results of Roundtable discussions that included topics such as the proposed Safe Rides plan, campus safety and the Art and Science report.
- Senator senior Brett Wiley presented a budget for Earth Week that included such items as a banner to hang over Franklin Street, T-shirts and a roundtable.
- Senate discussed creating the position of Vice President on Senate and how that person would be elected.
- Senate passed a money motion for \$25 to purchase a survey incentive for students who complete a survey about how they feel about their major and LSP classes.

DPS | Reports

- 2/23 Report of property damage in Department of Public Safety Building.
- 2/16 Freshman Kristopher Nelson, freshman Matthew Lewellen, freshman Danielle Skitt, freshman Trina Goodson and freshman Molly Troop were issued a Missouri Uniform Complaint and Summons for minor in possession of intoxicants.

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