

# Disneyland goes green, stays clean

Theme park's steam locomotives now run on biodiesel fuel.

By **ERIK ORTIZ**  
THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

**ANAHEIM** • The trains that fueled the dream for Walt Disney and his empire are being fed a steady diet of cleaner-burning, more environmentally friendly biodiesel.

The magic ingredient: soybean oil.

Since January, the four operable trains that run along the Disneyland Railroad have been injected with the orangey-yellow liquid (resembling apple juice), with workers slowly weaning the steam locomotives off ultra-low sulfur diesel. The trains are now a mix of 2 percent diesel and 98 percent soybean oil, known as B98.

It's a move that more and more companies are undertaking as legislators stress "green" alternatives in the face of climate change

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**FILL 'ER UP:** Engineer Craig Ludwick pumps a mix of 2 percent diesel and 98 percent soybean oil, known as B98, into one of Disney's locomotive tanks. The mix could cut the train's carbon dioxide emissions by 80 percent, officials say.

# DISNEY: An 'easy' decision

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reports and dependency on foreign oil.

For Disneyland, the switch to biodiesel saves as much as 150,000 gallons of diesel fuel each year, while potentially reducing carbon dioxide emissions by up to 80 percent, Disneyland Resort spokesman Bob Tucker said Monday.

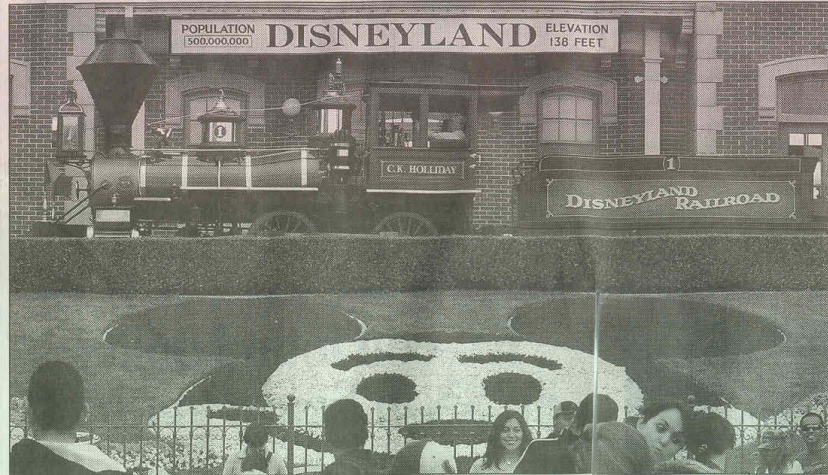
"The decision, once we knew the trains would perform well, was an easy one," said Frank Dela Vara, technical director for Disneyland's Environmental Affairs.

Talks began in June of last year with fuel provider SC Fuels of Orange to offer a biodiesel substitute. Most diesel engines can perform with biodiesel without needing special equipment.

The Disney locomotive tanks were cleaned out and retrofitted with new hoses and filters. The biodiesel is stored in underground tanks in the maintenance facility, and the fuel is pumped into the locomotives - just like regular gas.

"We didn't see any problems with startups or flame-outs," Dela Vara said of the initial testing phase.

An early concern was ensuring the new fuel source wouldn't damage the antique trains, but Disney officials say the process has been smooth with no discernible difference



**SMOOTH RIDES:** Some officials were concerned that the new fuel source would damage the antique trains, but Disney officials say there has been no discernible

difference in the rides. **JOSHUA SUDOCK, THE REGISTER**

in the rides.

Today, about 600 fleets nationwide use some form of biodiesel in their engines, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

While biodiesel is known to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, the state Air Resources Board classifies the fuel source under diesel because tests have shown it releases nitrogen oxide into the air, said spokeswoman Karen Caesar.

But for Disneyland, the conversion has also been cost-effective - while the regular diesel rate is \$2.96 per gallon, the B98 biodiesel runs \$2.42 per gallon.

The trains, meanwhile, continue to be one of the favorite attractions since their unveiling during the park's opening in 1955. On a peak day, they make about 40 trips around the park, shuttling up to 240 people a ride, train engineer Ron Mason said.

Disneyland officials also are looking into using biodiesel for other attractions and backstage equipment. For years, the boats on the Jungle Cruise ride have been running on compressed natural gas, another clean-burning fuel.

"We want other companies and the people that come and visit to be inspired by what we're doing, and practice their own ways of improving the environment," Tucker said.

## Reduce and reuse

Other "green" programs at the Disney Resort:

- **Finding Nemo Submarine Voyage:** Set to open in June, the new attraction features more than 30 tons of recycled glass as part of its lagoon scenery. The submarines are also being run on electric engines, instead of diesel.
- **Recycling program:** Park visitors are encouraged to recycle bottles and cans in designated bins. As an added bonus, Disney employees who see someone recycling will give them a lanyard with a Jiminy Cricket pin.

## Railroad at a glance

**Track length:** 1 1/8 miles

**Train speed:** 10-12 miles per hour

**Locomotive size:** 35 feet long, 9 feet tall and 5 feet wide

**Annual train usage in hours:** 5,000