



New Garbage Trucks Serve Dual Purposes

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (Jan. 20, 2016) – The City of Lexington is going green in a big way -- literally. The new Autocar E3™ hybrid [garbage trucks](#) are hard to miss with their bright green color scheme, but they are also "green" in the fact they will save the city almost 35 percent in fuel consumption and decrease emissions by almost 44 percent.

Dirk Apt, the public service manager over the City of Lexington Waste and Recycling Department, said the city decided to invest in two of these [hybrid garbage trucks](#) for several reasons, mostly to reduce the emissions left by these diesel engines and to reduce fuel costs, but also to assure the commitment of the city to embrace green initiatives.

"We were scheduled to replace a couple of the [garbage trucks](#) anyway," Apt said. "At the time, we discussed instead of just purchasing standard replacements, there were hybrid trucks out there that would save almost 50 percent in fuel costs and have fewer emissions. ... The City Council has asked us to include more green initiatives to improve air quality as well as reducing costs, and this checks off on both boxes."

What makes these trucks so unique is the fact the diesel engine idles at speeds below 45 mph, and hydraulics propel the vehicle when the engine is not engaged. They are specially designed for slow-moving heavy vehicles that make frequent stops. City officials are estimating a reduction of approximately 2,000 gallons in diesel fuel per vehicle per year for a savings of \$15,000 annually, depending on oil prices.

The Lexington City Council approved the purchase of the two [hybrid refuse vehicles](#) for \$809,000 in 2014. The purchase was partially funded by a \$284,000 Congestion Mitigation Air Quality grant from the Federal Highway Administration administered through the North Carolina Department of Transportation. Apt said with the grant, the cost of the hybrid trucks was actually less than purchasing standard trucks.

The purchase of the hybrid garbage trucks falls under the umbrella of two of the Lexington City Council goals: supporting the development of "green" initiatives and encouraging recycling and improving air quality. The purchase of the equipment also falls under the City Council's goal of maintaining the city's financial integrity while enhancing government services.

Lexington City Manager Alan Carson said city staff and the council try to implement their goals in as many ways as possible, including the purchase of equipment. He said with the funding from the grant, it was not a difficult decision to invest in the hybrid equipment.

"We are constantly working towards the goals set by the City Council," Carson said. "We ended up taking a look at the long-term savings versus the upfront cost, which was more than a normal truck costs. In our case, the CMAQ grant made it an easy decision. Anytime something is close to the same cost, this council is going to go toward the green initiatives. This was a no-brainer, a win-win all-around."

Not only do the [new garbage trucks](#) help reduce fuel consumption and improve air quality, they provide dual duties because they can also be used as a vehicle to pick up recycling. Apt said he is pleased with the new trucks and hopes when citizens see them they realize their city is trying to be good stewards of their taxes as well as to protect the community.

"I am very excited about the new trucks," Apt said. "With the budgets as tight as they have been the past couple of years, we are really appreciative of any new equipment. We really needed these trucks, and

they are also something that is good for the environment in the future. We want the people to know that we are dedicated to a cleaner, greener community, and we have decided to put our best foot forward.”

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