

AIRPLANISTA

Sometimes serious. Sometimes humorous. Always unpredictable. Welcome to the **Airplanista Magazine Blog**, where we take a lighthearted look at general and business aviation, the airlines, and the community of aviators I call our aviation family. Produced and edited by pilot and aviation writer Dan Pimentel. Sponsored by Celeste/Daniels Advertising & Design.

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Who Says GA Can't Be Green?

For those of you who read this blog regularly, you know I live in Eugene, Oregon, home to all the hippies who never stop listening to the Grateful Dead or following the writings of Ken Kesey. Eugene is the Berkeley of the Northwest, the Greenwich Village of the Left Coast, so it is not a surprise to anyone who loves Eugene as much as I do that it once was voted The Greenest City in America by greenguide.com:



Nestled in the Willamette River Valley with views of the Cascade Mountains, residents enjoy numerous bike trails, clean air and water, parkland and outlying wilderness areas. Hydroelectric and wind power contribute over 85 percent of Eugene's power, reducing greenhouse gas emissions considerably. A little over 16 percent of Eugene is green space, including athletic fields, city parks, public gardens, trails and waterfront. The city has over 2,500 acres of publicly owned wetlands, and its West Eugene Wetlands Program includes a mitigation bank, a native plant nursery, protected wetlands and educational features.

It is quite easy to see from the above pull quote how seriously we take the environment here. So it was with great joy that I read about [Douglas Rodante and his Biojet](#) on aopa.org:

*The day may come when the private and commercial jets crisscrossing our skies run, at least in part, on plant-based fuels that don't contribute to global warming or resource depletion. That's the goal of pilot and entrepreneur Douglas Rodante who, on Oct. 1, made the **first jet flight fueled by 100-percent biodiesel**. Rodante and Chief Pilot Carol Sugars*

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first flew a Czechoslovakian-built L-29 aircraft around the pattern before making a 37-minute test-flight at altitudes up to 17,000 feet the following day. The aircraft, which is rated to run on a variety of fuels, including heating oil, required no modifications to run on biodiesel.

That is so very cool. As a proponent of bio-anything, I applaud Rodante and his quest to light up his tailpipe with massive explosions of french fry oil:

Rodante plans to make a cross-country flight from Nevada to Florida at the end of November, as soon as he and his team have satisfied several FAA testing and safety requirements. And they hope to modify a Learjet to make a high-altitude round-the-world flight next year. The test program is being conducted by Green Flight International and Biodiesel Solutions.

And Rodante wants everyone to know it's not just corn that can be used in this quest:

"It's important for people to understand that we can use a lot of different crops to make biodiesel, many of which do not compete with our food crops. There are plants you can actually grow in the desert that would work," Rodante explained. "You don't have to use 100-percent biodiesel," said Rodante. "We're doing it to make a point. But if we can implement even a small percentage of bio-fuel into commercial aviation and land transportation, the reduction in carbon emissions would be significant and contribute to alleviating our global warming problems."

Kudos to this project, and this innovator. I hope he finds a way to build a massive biofuel plant out in Iowa somewhere where he can produce enough of his "Corn-A" to launch lots and lots of airliners skyward. In the process, I hope Rodante and his investors get filthy rich, doing more than most people to actually reverse a seriously ugly trend on this planet.

It is projects like this that will change our environment for the better, as soon as January, 2009 comes along and we get a new Decider who decides that global warming is not a conspiracy manufactured by the Democrats.

 Posted by [Dan Pimentel](#) at 9:45 PM

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BLOG ARCHIVE

▶ 2014 (22)

▶ 2013 (67)

▶ 2012 (52)

▶ 2011 (72)

▶ 2010 (70)

▶ 2009 (133)

▶ 2008 (174)

▼ 2007 (245)

▶ December (15)

▶ November (18)

▼ October (20)