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Biodiesel-powered jet makes transcontinental flight

By Erin Voegele | November 13, 2008

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Green Flight International successfully completed the world's first transcontinental biodiesel-powered jet flight Nov. 1. The flight began in Reno, Nev., and ended in Leesburg, Fla.

According to Douglas Rodante, Green Flight's chief executive officer, 1,776 miles of the flight were flown using B100. The remaining 710 miles were fueled by a mixture containing 50 percent biodiesel and 50 percent jet fuel.

The aircraft completing the flight was a 1968 L29 Dephin, a single engine military jet aircraft built in Czechoslovakia. By using the Dephin, Green Flight said it was able to overcome cold-flow problems associated with biodiesel. Rodante said the aircraft has a system integrated into the fuel system that allows the fuel to be heated. Around the fuel filter there is an area where the engine oil runs through, heating the fuel going through the fuel filter, which is then circulated back through the fuel tanks. "Our fuel temperature on the flight was 27 degrees Celsius (80 degrees Fahrenheit) and that was up and over 17,000 feet," Rodante said.

Lake Erie Biofuels LLC co-sponsored the flight. According to Justin Corritore, Lake Erie Biofuels' spokesman, Green Flight International selected the company because of its national recognition and superior quality standards. "[The project] is really opening up a lot of opportunities for us that we didn't foresee developing," Corritore said. "We look forward to working with Green Flight in the future."

Green Flight International, which was founded in 2006 as a result of environmental concerns, researches the feasibility of implementing alternative fuels into aviation to reduce the industry's carbon dioxide footprint. According to Rodante, the Federal Aviation Administration plans to use Green Flight's test flight as a model for future fuel testing.

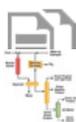
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