

## Alternative Fuels (Biofuels)

- Taiwanese scientists develop a technique for producing ethanol from rice straw, which produces a 99.5%-pure biofuel without displacing food crops. Current cost is \$0.67 per liter, but expected to drop. Link: <http://www.autobloggreen.com/2008/02/20/taiwanese-scientists-develop-ethanol-from-rice-straw/>
- Japan announces plans to construct its first commercial ethanol plant using non-edible brown rice. The \$15 million plant is expected to reach full capacity by March 2009. Link: <http://www.planetark.com/dailynewsstory.cfm/newsid/46539/story.htm1st>
- New research from the University of Idaho and the USDA measured soybean biodiesel to have a positive energy balance of 3.5-to-1. This is an increase from the 1998 value of 3.2-to-1, and is predominantly due to increased crop yields and a lowered use of pesticides. Link: <http://nbb.grassroots.com/08Releases/EnergyBalance/>

## Alternative Fuels (non-Biofuels)

- San José Airport announces an additional \$1.3 million in funding for upgrades to its existing CNG facilities. The airport currently offers public CNG refueling stations and plans to provide additional financial incentives to taxi and shuttle service operators. Link: <http://www.ngvglobal.com/en/market-developments/san-jos-airport-steps-up-ngv-program.html>

## Hybrid

- Nissan Motor Company will debut hybrid systems on their high-end Infiniti vehicles, as these heavier, more costly vehicles will benefit more from the enhanced fuel efficiency than their smaller line of cars. Nissan is also looking into developing a \$3,000 car for the Indian market. Link: <http://www.reuters.com/article/latestCrisis/idUSN13618805>
- Mercedes-Benz is set to release the world's first production hybrid vehicle using lithium ion batteries in 2009. The S400 BlueHybrid is expected to get around 30mpg, with a 3.5L V-6 gas engine. Link: <http://www.autobloggreen.com/2008/02/29/mercedes-benz-s400-bluehybrid-first-production-lithium-ion-hybr/>
- Volkswagen will showcase its new diesel-hybrid Golf at the Geneva Auto Show. The TDI Hybrid, which will be a strong parallel hybrid with start-stop capability, is expected to get 69 mpg (U.S.). Link: <http://www.autobloggreen.com/2008/02/28/geneva-08-preview-volkswagen-golf-tdi-hybrid-concept/>

## PHEV

- North Carolina governor Mike Easley announced funding for a plug-in hybrid research center at NC State University. The Advanced Transportation Energy Center will focus on developing cheaper batteries and a network of electrical recharging stations. Link: <http://www.autobloggreen.com/2008/02/14/north-carolinas-nascar-governor-announces-phev-research-center/>

## EVs

- India's Tara International announces its low-cost, battery-powered Tiny to compete with Tata Motor's Nano. The vehicle is the smallest of a series of electric vehicles to be released by Tara International and, like the Nano, will retail for less than \$2,500. Link: <http://www.autobloggreen.com/2008/02/18/move-over-tatas-nano-taras-electric-tiny-is-now-the-worlds-c/>

## Efficiency / Fuel Efficiency

- ACEEE releases its list of the Greenest and Meanest Vehicles of 2008, with the CNG-fueled Honda Civic GX gaining the highest environmental score and the Volkswagen Touareg scoring the worst. Link: <http://www.greenercars.org/highlights.htm>
- Honda engineers are currently working on a waste heat recovery system for vehicles that uses a Rankine cycle co-generation system. Efficiency savings have been modest thus far, but Honda plans to deliver a fuller report at the SAE World Congress 2008. Link: <http://www.greencarcongress.com/2008/02/honda-researchi.html#more>
- The 2008 Shell Eco-marathon, which "challenges teams to drive the furthest on the least amount of energy," is scheduled for April 10-13 at the California Speedway. Current record: 1,902.7 mpg. Link: <http://www.autobloggreen.com/2008/02/29/2008-shell-eco-marathon-coming-in-april-will-anyone-best-1902-m/>
- DuPont has released a new nylon resin called Zytel®, offering a 50%-lighter alternative to metal car components. Zytel is currently being used in the exhaust systems of all new Volkswagen Golfs. Link: <http://www.autobloggreen.com/2008/02/28/duponts-zytel-can-cut-weight-of-auto-components-in-half/>

## Diesel

- Audi dealers will be offering diesel and hybrid SUV options starting later this year. The Q7 diesel is expected to be released near the end of 2008, and a Q7 hybrid will be out sometime in 2009. Diesel and hybrid versions of the Q5, a smaller SUV, will also be offered. Link: <http://www.autobloggreen.com/2008/02/13/us-audi-dealers-learn-that-q7-tdi-q5-hybrid-on-the-way/>

## Legislation

- Maryland lawmakers are currently looking into instituting minimum noise requirements for vehicles, requiring quiet electric and hybrid-electric vehicles to emit some sound to alert nearby pedestrians. Link: <http://www.autobloggreen.com/2008/02/16/maryland-legislators-may-require-cars-to-make-some-noise/>
- The Environmental Protection Agency bumped up the 2008 renewable fuels standard to 7.76%, giving a total of 9 billion gallons of biofuels that will be blended into gasoline sold within the U.S. Link: <http://www.autobloggreen.com/2008/02/12/environmental-protection-agency-bumps-renewable-fuel-requirement/>
- The House of Representatives recently passed an Energy Tax Bill that would remove tax incentives for oil companies and provide support for wind and solar technologies. The Bill now moves on to the Senate, with the President promising to veto. Link: <http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601087&sid=aLJGjEpQ7F1g&refer=home>

## Miscellaneous

- Oil prices exceed the \$100/barrel mark, reaching record-high levels that are expected to continue throughout the year. Link: <http://money.aol.com/news/articles/a/oil-prices-retreat-after-record-close/20080219112009990001>
- Penn State and Arizona State researchers have created a solar cell that can use water and sunlight to produce recoverable hydrogen. While still inefficient (0.3%), these devices could be made significantly more efficient in the future, providing a clean H<sub>2</sub> fuel source. Link: [http://www.eurekalert.org/pub\\_releases/2008-02/ps-scd021108.php](http://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2008-02/ps-scd021108.php)
- American scientists have created metallic foam that is able to capture large amounts of CO<sub>2</sub>, up to 83 times its volume. The foam could potentially be mass-produced in a short timeframe and used in a variety of vehicular and power plant applications. Link: <http://www.autobloggreen.com/2008/02/19/scientists-unveil-artificial-co-sub-2-sub-capturing-foam/>
- Consumer Reports recently announced their “Best & Worst Cars” list for 2008, with the Toyota Prius being named as the most “green” car for the fifth year in a row. Link: <http://www.autoblog.com/2008/02/28/em-consumer-reports-em-names-top-picks-for-2008/>
- Virgin Airlines completed the first biofueled-airline flight, from London to Amsterdam. The Boeing 747 had one of its engines supplied with biofuel, while the other three used standard jet fuel. Link: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/02/25/2171098.htm>

## Medium- and Heavy Duty Vehicles

- Wal-Mart will begin using four heavy-duty LNG trucks at a facility in Apple Valley, CA. The demonstration project is intended to provide over-the-road testing of the Westport Innovations HPDI fuel system, used in conjunction with Cummins ISX Engines. Link: <http://www.ngvglobal.com/en/market-developments/wal-mart-westport-and-mojave-desert-air-district-partner-to-reduce-emissions-with-lng-trucks.html>
- Coca-Cola will purchase 120 new hybrid electric trucks from Eaton Corporation to add to its original fleet. The 20 hybrids currently in service have decreased emissions by 32 percent and have 37 percent higher fuel economy than conventional trucks. Link: [http://www.businesswire.com/portal/site/home/index.jsp?epi\\_menuItemID=887566059a3aedb6efaaa9e27a808a0c&ndmViewId=news\\_view&ndmConfigId=1001382&newsId=20080227005894&newsLang=en](http://www.businesswire.com/portal/site/home/index.jsp?epi_menuItemID=887566059a3aedb6efaaa9e27a808a0c&ndmViewId=news_view&ndmConfigId=1001382&newsId=20080227005894&newsLang=en)
- Lithium Technology Corporation has announced a \$4.7 million deal to supply batteries for a hybrid bus program in Flint, Michigan with Kettering University and Transportation Techniques LLC. Link: <http://www.autobloggreen.com/2008/02/28/4-7-million-order-for-hybrid-buses-in-michigan/>
- Truck manufacturer Utilmaster and hybrid power train developer Azure Dynamics have announced a deal to develop fuel-efficient hybrid vehicles for commercial fleets. Link: <http://www.autobloggreen.com/2008/02/27/azure-dynamics-and-utilmaster-to-begin-building-hybrids-together/>