

## Homegrown biofuel going fast

### Shell unveils eco-friendly cellulosic ethanol at Ottawa gas station

BY VITO PILIECI, THE OTTAWA CITIZEN JUNE 11, 2009



Transport Minister John Baird turns the gas pump on the media Wednesday. He is joined by Nepean-Carleton MP Pierre Poilievre, Saskatchewan MP Randy Hoback, left, and Luis Scoffone, vice-president of Biofuels at Shell.

**Photograph by:** Julie Oliver, The Ottawa Citizen, The Ottawa Citizen

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For the first time in Ottawa -- or anywhere -- logen Energy Corp.'s low-impact, homegrown ethanol is available to the public.

But get it while you can.

The 10 per cent ethanol, 90 per cent gasoline mixture will be offered for only one month, and only at a single Shell station on Merivale Road near Baseline. The cost will be the same as regular gas.

After that, Shell could rotate the availability of logen-made ethanol to other Shell stations around the world, said Luis Scoffone, the oil company's vice-president of biofuels. Shell owns 50 per cent of Ottawa-based logen.

Even this limited distribution, however, was being heralded Wednesday as a milestone for logen, which

has been working since the 1970s to develop a biofuel that is not produced from corn or other grains that could be used for food. Iogen's cellulosic ethanol comes from corn husks and corn stalks as well as straw, materials that would normally be used for animal bedding or left to rot in a field.

Cellulosic ethanol requires less energy to produce and places less pressure on food prices during manufacturing.

"We are taking something that would otherwise be discarded and using it to fuel someone's car," said Brian Foody, chief executive officer of Iogen, who joined Shell officials and federal politicians to launch the pilot project. "There is only one place in the world that this fuel is made and that's right here in Ottawa."

Iogen manufactures ethanol at a 10-acre facility at 300 Hunt Club Rd. The "demonstration plant" is currently producing 40,000 litres of fuel a month, according to a joint release from Iogen and Shell.

Foody said the one-month trial at Shell's 1548 Merivale Rd. outlet would see around 60,000 litres of ethanol distributed.

Until now, the federal government has the largest purchaser of Iogen's ethanol. The government uses the locally produced fuel to fill the tanks of its vehicles, some of which run on mixtures as high as 85-per-cent ethanol.

Shell called the commercial availability of cellulosic ethanol at its pumps a "world first" and said the trial project would signal a shift in the way the world produces its ethanol.

Iogen has been working to open a \$400-million plant in Saskatchewan that would be capable of producing more than 70 million litres a year. The company has said the new facility could be operational as early as 2011.

Neither Iogen nor representatives from the federal government would confirm that timeline yesterday, however.

Iogen has already signed up nearly 600 farmers to supply the facility with straw, which would be used to make ethanol as well as electricity for the facility.

Governments and fuel companies have been working to develop ethanol to reduce greenhouse emissions and dependence on foreign oil.

While burning biofuels still releases carbon dioxide, growing the plants absorbs similar amounts of the gas from the atmosphere.

In 2006, the federal government mandated that all gas sold within Canada must have five per cent renewable content by 2010.

