

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**April 13, 2005**

## **Sandy Spring Friends School Converts Bus Fleet To Run on Soybean-Based Biodiesel Fuel**

April 13, 2005 – Sandy Spring Friends School in Montgomery County, Maryland announced today that its fleet of 15 school buses is now running on soybean-based biodiesel fuel, a cleaner-burning, renewable energy source.

The pre-K through 12 college preparatory school of over 500 students is believed to be the first independent school in the state to convert to biodiesel fuel made from domestically grown soybean oil.

Located on 140 wooded acres at 16923 Norwood Road in the historic Sandy Spring area, the school's daily bus routes extend throughout Montgomery County and into parts of Howard and Prince George's counties as well as Washington, D.C.

"We are proud to be part of this movement toward more innovative and responsible use of alternative fuels," said Head of School Ken Smith. "We appreciate the efforts of our alumnus Dan Goodman '78, who spearheaded this changeover along with David Walter of the maintenance department and Director of Facilities Robert True."

No alterations or modifications were required to the engine or any other mechanical systems in the conversion of the buses.

Goodman notes that biodiesel is an environmentally-friendly "green" fuel, which produces far less of pollutants such as carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, and a number of known cancer-causing compounds. It produces less overall smoke and significantly less obnoxious exhaust.

The soybean oil is mixed with lye (used in making soap and as a drain cleaner) and methanol (wood alcohol, produced naturally in the anaerobic metabolism of many varieties of bacteria). This process separates the oil into glycerin (an ingredient in soap, toothpaste, cellophane, and many other items) and biodiesel.

Biodiesel is "carbon-neutral," Goodman explains. When burned, it releases only as much carbon dioxide as the plants that it came from removed from the atmosphere, so it does not contribute to global warming. It is biodegradable, non-toxic, and non-flammable.

Biodiesel has other important benefits, he adds, including supporting American farmers, easing dependency on foreign oil, and enabling sustainable economic growth. It also produces a quieter, smoother running engine with no noticeable loss in performance while providing better engine lubrication and reducing engine wear.

When Rudolph Diesel invented the diesel engine in 1893, Goodman said, it ran on vegetable oil. It wasn't until some years later, after Dr. Diesel's death, that petroleum producers co-opted his engine to run on a cheaper and dirtier gasoline byproduct they named "diesel fuel". Biodiesel is now a contender in the race to find replacement energy sources for our dwindling supply of fossil fuels.

Goodman is also working with others at the school on plans for a project to add a second "green" fuel to the SSFS school bus fleet: recycled french fries oil!

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Sandy Spring Friends School is a pre-K through 12 coeducational college preparatory school with strong academics, arts and athletic programs incorporating traditional Quaker values. It is located on 140 wooded acres at 16923 Norwood Road, Sandy Spring, Maryland 20860.

Web site: [www.ssfs.org](http://www.ssfs.org)

Phone: (301) 774-7455 Fax: (301) 924-1115

**For further information: Anne Ball at Sandy Spring Friends School**  
email [anne.ball@ssfs.org](mailto:anne.ball@ssfs.org)  
(301) 774-7455 ext. 375 or (301) 384-8663 (home)

**To contact Dan Goodman directly: email [dangoodman@zernike.us](mailto:dangoodman@zernike.us) or phone (301) 704-4459.**

For an online Fact Sheet on Diesel Buses and potentially harmful diesel exhaust and fumes inside school buses: [www.nrdc.org/greensquad/library/diesel.html](http://www.nrdc.org/greensquad/library/diesel.html). This site is sponsored by the Green Squad from the Natural Resources Defense Council and the Healthy Schools Network.

Some other sites for additional material re: health consequences of diesel fuel in school buses and its effects on children:

<http://www.nrdc.org/media/pressreleases010212.asp>

<http://www.nrdc.org/air/transportation/gbus.asp>

<http://www.nrdc.org/air/transportation/schoolbus/sbusinx.asp>

<http://www.nrdc.org/greensquad/library/diesel.html>