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As I write this month's Tech Talk, the U.S. nationwide average price for a gallon of gasoline is \$3.85. On May 8, the Energy Information Administration (EIA) released a revised forecast for gas prices during the summer driving season (April through September) that predicts the average price will drop to \$3.79. That's good news for all of us, whether filling up for the daily commute or planning a longer road trip. Regardless of what vehicle you drive, it's likely that maximizing fuel economy and extending engine life are high priorities. In fact, a 2011 survey by the Consumer Reports National Research Center found the "age of the average car driven by respondents has increased to eight years," with 23 percent of motorists surveyed driving cars from the 1990s. And for those planning on purchasing a new or newer model, 62 percent expected their next vehicles to have better fuel economy than their previous models.

Motorists are demanding more from newer vehicles and also want their current vehicles to last longer, but new government mandates might make achieving higher efficiencies more difficult.

In April 2012, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) approved the sale of E15 (15 percent ethanol and 85 percent gasoline) for cars and trucks manufactured in 2001 or later. This extended by six years a 2010 waiver permitting the use of motor gasoline blends containing up to 15 percent ethanol in 2007 and newer vehicles. All other gas-powered engines, such as those on boats, snowmobiles, lawn mowers, motorcycles and off-road vehicles, are prohibited from using E15. This means that the current E10 (10 percent ethanol/90 percent gasoline) blended fuel, sold at more than 90

E15 fuel has been approved for sale.

Its impact will be felt differently by motorists and powersports enthusiasts.

percent of service stations nationwide, remains the de facto choice for owners of model year 2000 and older vehicles and other gas-powered engines. The exception to this being flex-fuel vehicles compatible with E85 (85 percent ethanol/15 percent gasoline).

Automakers have resisted the new E15 ruling, arguing that their vehicles – new and old – aren't designed to accommodate gasoline containing 15 percent ethanol. Service station owners have concerns about potential liability issues arising from consumers using the wrong ethanol blend and are worried about the costs of retrofitting gas pumps or installing new ones to make E15 available.

While the future of E15 is uncertain, ethanol-blended fuels are here to stay. Ethanol has been used for decades as a gasoline additive because it burns cleaner than gasoline. The downside to ethanol is its fuel economy and performance. Ethanol produces less energy than gasoline. According to the EIA, "A gallon of ethanol has only two-thirds the energy of a gallon of conventional gasoline, and the number of miles traveled by a given vehicle per gallon of fuel is directly proportional to the energy contained in the fuel." In addition, studies have shown fuel systems containing plastic or rubber components can be damaged by ethanol exposure. There are also problems at the molecular level. Ethanol and gasoline do not form chemical bonds and ethanol is highly attracted to water. Even small amounts of water entering the fuel supply can break the weak ethanol-to-water bond and separate (phase separation). This suspension falls to the bottom of the fuel tank and can increase engine temperatures and cause engine damage. Less

energy per gallon and phase separation are just two of the problems inherent with ethanol-blended gasoline. Smaller engines face additional maintenance and performance issues.

Because the widely available E10 can start degrading in just 30 days, the shorter shelf life of ethanol-blended gasoline vs. pure gasoline is another potential problem for small-engine operation. With equipment such as motorcycles, ATVs, boats and other less frequently used tools like chainsaws and leaf blowers, fuel may sit in the tank for a month or much longer between starts. During this time gasoline absorbs water, which leads to fuel breakdown. As gasoline degrades, gums and varnish can clog carburetors, fuel injectors and fuel filters. The result is decreased starting performance and drivability issues. Most drivers fuel their passenger vehicles more frequently than every 30 days, so gasoline breakdown issues are less common in autos and trucks. Additionally, many newer vehicles have computer sensors that make adjustments for high ethanol content, but the majority of small engines lack such technology. Fortunately for powersports enthusiasts, there are solutions to this long-term problem.

Quickshot® is designed to keep water dispersed and helps combat problems associated with ethanol-blended fuel. It also cleans deposit build-up in fuel systems and combustion chamber components. This means better performance and reduced impact from ethanol-blended fuels. We all value our free time; engines need to start on command when we get a sliver of time to get out and go. ■

From the President's Desk

With AMSOIL University 2012 now behind us, it's time for those Dealers who attended to take what they learned straight to the field to help even more consumers realize benefits they have never experienced with other brands of lubricants. But before we leave this fantastic event completely behind, I want to share a few final thoughts.

First, I want to thank all those who did attend. It was wonderful to see you. I mean that sincerely. I can assure you that the knowledge you gained and the commitment you demonstrated will pay dividends far into the future. Even greater success is yours for the taking. I hope all Dealers will take advantage of the opportunity and make plans to join us one day at this tremendous event. I would also like to extend an open invitation to our loyal Preferred Customers. An AMSOIL Dealership is waiting for you, and I welcome you with open arms to a future AMSOIL U.

The most striking aspect of the entire event was the infectious enthusiasm throughout. You could feel the energy. Our Dealers know that with the growing demand for synthetic lubricants and the inexorable push for extended drain intervals no company is better positioned to capture the expanding market than AMSOIL. Dealers are viewing the future with dollar signs in their eyes.

Along with that enthusiasm comes a very real sense of loyalty. It's been a long road since the introduction of our first synthetic motor oil in 1972, and the struggles we faced as the industry's only synthetic oil are behind us. We face new challenges today, but we do so from a position of leadership. We are clearly recognized for our innovation, and the quality of the products carrying the AMSOIL name is absolutely undisputable. We have established brand loyalty, and that has never been more obvious than it was at AMSOIL University.

But loyalty to the AMSOIL brand extends well beyond our Dealers. It didn't happen by accident. AMSOIL meets

the criteria established by brand loyalty experts, and we have given consumers every reason to attach their loyalty to us.

1. Something better: AMSOIL products are formulated to the absolute highest standards. We invest in technology that other companies simply will not invest in. AMSOIL does not compromise on quality. We do not sacrifice performance for the sake of profit margins. AMSOIL products bring value that is not achieved with other products.

2. Sense of belonging: Consumers identify with AMSOIL. We are an unconventional company with unconventional products. AMSOIL consumers belong to an exclusive club. They share a desire for performance that is lost on other consumers. They know something other consumers do not know.

3. Credibility: It extends beyond our products doing what we claim our products will do. Credibility is achieved through the image we project. It is gained through the professionalism displayed in our sales brochures, data bulletins and technical studies. Our label designs and product packaging are as good as it gets. Our website is a true source of legitimate information, and the training we provide cannot be found in other companies.

4. Accessibility: We don't hide from our consumers. Our staff remains available at all times. We field technical questions at all levels, don't run from complaints and apply consideration to all worthwhile suggestions. Consumers want to know they have access to real people, and AMSOIL takes that responsibility seriously.

5. Sustainability: We remain ahead of the curve. We deliver products people want. The AMSOIL brand has endured because we keep our product line fresh, but we don't make changes just for the sake of change. The goal has always been to ensure that every person who becomes an AMSOIL customer will remain an AMSOIL customer for life.

All the success this company has achieved, of course, must be shared with our AMSOIL Dealers. Together we have built a brand that will remain an industry leader for generations to come. And while we still have work to do, you can be assured that your independent AMSOIL business can grow as large as your commitment will take it.



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