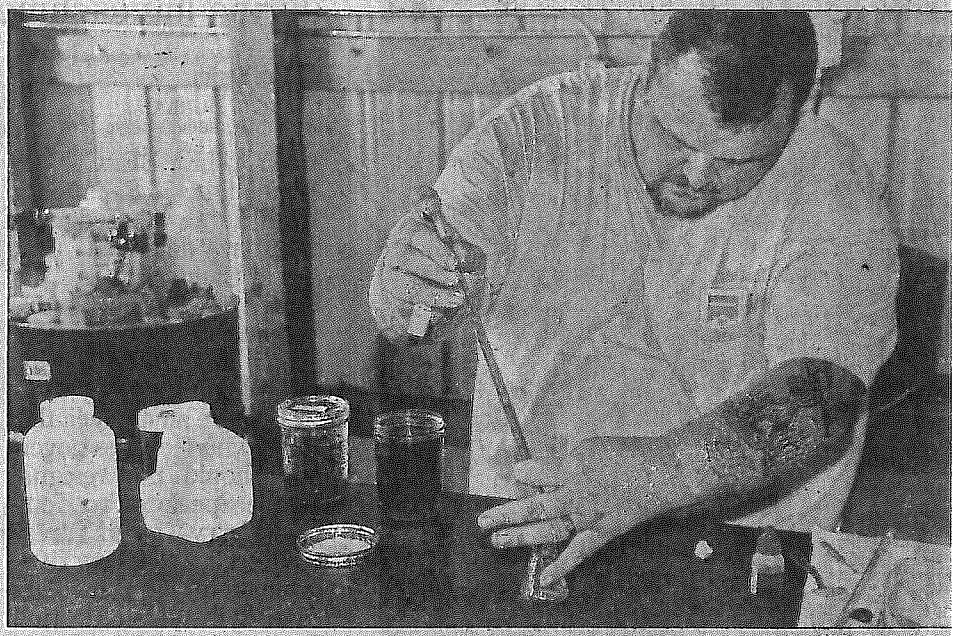
Pickens gets state praise for its biodiesel program

County official wants to use fuel to generate electricity next



JOHN C. STEVENSON / Staf

Jason Anders, who supervises Pickens County's biodiesel program, tests samples of the fuel produced at the county's facility at the landfill.

By John C. Stevenson
STAFF WRITER
jstevens@greenvillenews.com

In abuilding next to the landfill, Pickens County employees have mastered a feat of modern-day alchemy — they're turning base, used cooking oil into precious fuel to power vehicles, and maybe more.

And the county's homegrown biodiesel project has garnered statewide notice. The program, which began about 18 months ago, according to County Administrator Chap Hurst, recently received an honorable mention during the state Association of Counties' annual conference.

"When we look at the cost per gallon of regular diesel fuel and the cost we can produce it for, it's a substantial savings," Hurst said. "We get a cost savings, and better longevity in the life cycles of the vehicles we put it in."

Hurst is proud of the program for several reasons, not the least of which is the thrifty way the county has gone about making it happen. Hurst said initial estimates put the start-up cost at $750,000, but the county pared that down to less than $190,000.

Much of the savings was realized by using county employees to build the production facility — from the metal building that houses it to the network of pipes and tanks that help turn used vegetable oil into biodiesel fuel.

The facility went online about two months ago, and produces about 1,000 gallons of fuel a month, Hurst said.

The county is getting the main ingredient for its homebrewed fuel — spent vegetable oil — by collecting it from area restaurants and other commercial kitchens. "It's a very green product," Hurst noted.

The used vegetable oil is cleaned and combined with about 15 percent methanol made from corn.

The finished product is piped underground to fuel pumps, where about 20 vehicles, from trucks to backhoes, fill up their tanks.

And, Hurst said, he wants to run more than vehicles on the county's biodiesel fuel.

The facility can produce as much as 750,000 gallons of biodiesel fuel a year, he said, and with sufficient production, the county could use it to power generators at its sewer plants. That would effectively take them off the electrical grid, a move Hurst said would save $500,000 a year.

Businessman Rush Wilson Jr. dies

By Abe Hardesty
STAFF WRITER
ahardest@greenvillenews.com

In a 1999 interview with *The Greenville News*, Rush Wilson Jr. offered the secret to his success.

"You've got to have an intense interest in people," Wilson said. "And it can't be superficial."

Wilson died Friday, having followed his motto through 50 years as a

America, where he was a past director of the Blue Ridge Council. He was also a member of the St. Andrews Society of Upper South Carolina.

Raised on a West Virginia farm during the Great Depression years, Wilson taught himself to play golf on a cornfield with one club. He played regularly until his health began to decline seven months ago.

visited Greenville to research the possibility of a second store. He immediately opened a store here on North Main Street, beginning a lifelong connection to what became his adopted hometown.

Billy Long, a longtime Greenville attorney who worked in the store as a Davidson College student, called Wilson "a great guy to work for and a great

North Carolina store a moved the family to Gre ville. Wife Ruth, a biolo teacher when the cou lived in Davidson, a worked at the store u her retirement in 2002. Rush Wilson III is comp president today. The st originally located on N Main Street, moved West North Street in to make room for the H Hotel and Convention