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Mark Ylen/Democrat-Herald  
John Knox thinks his 1982 Mazda Truck with a modified engine that runs on biofuel can provide businesses with an economical and environmentally sound means of delivery.

## Delivery service runs on grease

By Steve Lathrop  
Albany Democrat-Herald

The clients have not been beating down his door just yet, but John Knox thinks once people check him out he'll get busier.

"The customers I have did the math," says Knox, whose Grease Lightning Delivery is designed to provide an economical and environmentally friendly alternative for businesses. "I believe I can save people money."

Knox says what makes his delivery service affordable is that it is powered by biofuel. Biodiesel mixes with vegetable grease that runs through a modified two-tank fuel system on his 1982 Mazda diesel truck. Now he avoids gas stations all together.

"I get the vegetable grease from local restaurants," he says. "It costs about 60 cents for the grease and about half of that goes for fuel taxes."

His biodiesel is manufactured by a friend and goes directly into the truck's gas tank. The vegetable grease runs through his modified fuel system and is heated to about 180 degrees.

"That gets the water out," he said. "Once it's hot and thin enough to go through the pumps it runs just like diesel."

Knox says it allows him to be very competitive with his delivery prices. He said the system gives him about 30 miles to a gallon. The advantages are slowly catching on with customers.

"I've picked up some clients and met my expenses so far," said Knox. "I'm seeing more people and trying to make face-to-face contacts."

He saves money doing much of his own maintenance on the truck.

"I can't do it all but I can do a lot. I'm a shade tree mechanic," he said.

His original motivation to start the business was to address environmental issues. He had begun using his biofuel during the summer and found out it was green in more ways than one.

“It was great just to be able to afford to drive around,” Knox said.

That ultimately got him thinking about business applications.

“It occurred to me I could offer an environmental alternative at a reasonable price,” Knox said. “More people are considering costs. I think I offer a way they can save.”

Knox says he will deliver in the valley, to the coast, Eugene and Portland. Same-day service in and around Albany and Corvallis is \$5.

Getting to the point where he could start his own business hasn't been an easy process. Knox has a degree in chemical engineering from the University of Texas and spent 21 months in the Peace Corps in West Africa, where he trained local people to deal with water and sanitation issues. He also suffered a severe nerve injury.

During his service his parents had moved to Salem, which brought him to Oregon to rehabilitate.

“I was practically bed-ridden for 9 months,” he said.

He developed an interest in alternative fuels during rehab and ultimately turned that into his business.

Knox says he maps out his routes using a laptop computer and a GPS system to ensure maximum driving efficiency. He is also limited in his load capacity to what will fit in his truck. His customers include florists, farmers and mechanics.

“Right now it's just me but I'm encouraged,” he says. “If it takes off I'm ready to expand.”

Knox runs his company from his Albany home. Information is available on his website, [www.greaselightingdelivery.com](http://www.greaselightingdelivery.com), or by calling (541) 974-0969.

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