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## Janesville truck dealership shows off its increasingly popular hybrid vehicles

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By Sara Siekierski  
Daily News staff writer

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JANESVILLE -- In a country where gas prices are high and diesel prices even higher, Lakeside International Trucks in Janesville wants to bring some good news to the marketplace.

The local commercial truck dealer showcased the International DuraStar Hybrid truck in Janesville Thursday with an open house for customers. The DuraStar Hybrid, which is manufactured by Navistar International, is a diesel hybrid electric truck that offers 30 to 60 percent fuel savings over traditional commercial diesel trucks. The Hybrid Truck Users Forum estimates that nearly 1,000 gallons of fuel can be saved annually on utility trucks.

The hybrid provides fuel savings of 30-40 percent on standard in-city pickup but can save as much as 60 percent when used as a utility truck with a bucket because the vehicle can operate on the battery with the engine turned off, said Rob Durham of Lakeside International Trucks.

The hybrid trucks are also much cleaner than normal commercial trucks in that the emissions are greatly reduced, said Dealer Marketing Manager David Wrobel.

"They are actually cleaning the air in some cities," Wrobel said.

The trucks are also community-friendly, Wrobel said, because they are much quieter than regular commercial trucks.

Wrobel said about 150 customers are currently driving hybrid trucks. The customers are from both utility companies and larger fleets.

With the trend to "go green" and trucking companies pinched by the high cost of diesel fuel, Wrobel said many companies are interested in purchasing hybrid trucks.

"It really is on the minds of business owners right now," Wrobel said.

The cost of a hybrid truck, however, can be a deterrent for small companies.

"For smaller traditional businesses, it seems untouchable," Wrobel said, adding that a hybrid truck currently costs about \$40,000-\$50,000 more than regular commercial trucks.

Though the cost is high, government incentives are available for customers who choose to buy hybrid trucks, said Fleet Account Executive Todd Soczka. Customers can apply for federal and state grants and receive tax credits. With federal grants, customers can save up to \$12,000 on the purchase of a hybrid truck.

As with all new things, Wrobel said it will take some time to get customers on board to purchase hybrid trucks. Educating customers on the benefits of hybrid trucks and the government aid they may qualify for are key to pointing them in a new direction, Wrobel said.

Soczka also noted that it took some time before people caught on to hybrid cars. Now that hybrid cars are becoming more popular, Soczka said hybrid trucks should follow suit because they aren't much different.

"It's a lot of the same technology, just bigger," Soczka said.



Lakeside International Trucks in Janesville showcased hybrid trucks Thursday with an open house for customers. Many companies have been interested in purchasing hybrid trucks because of the 30 to 60 percent fuel savings some of them provide over traditional diesel trucks. In addition, the trucks pollute the air less and are much quieter than regular trucks. *Staff photo by Sara Siekierski*