



MARCH 2006

HYBRIDS HAVE BUDGET'S FUEL BUDGET BALANCING BETTER

What's certainly not news these days is the cost of fuel and how that is impacting all kinds of businesses. **Budget Maintenance** was certainly no exception and, when we understood the reality that a gallon of gasoline will never be below \$2 again, we developed a plan that would benefit both Budget Maintenance and our clients.

Budget Maintenance's plan for fuel savings is broad but includes transportation directives that are being called revolutionary for a company like ours.

"Budget Maintenance is setting an excellent standard for all service companies who undertake a good deal of regional traveling," said **John Allen Jr.**, company president.

"We are conscious of the fact that increased fuel costs are often passed on to customers and we're attempting to alleviate some of that."

Part of the fuel savings plan involved the purchase of two fuel efficient **Dodge Sprinter** cargo vans to transport personnel and equipment efficiently to and from job sites. The Sprinter, introduced into the Budget fleet in 2005, is a diesel powered vehicle featuring walk through height and maneuverability superior to the earlier model Budget Maintenance vans. The Sprinter comes in around 27 mpg, surpassing the mileage of any other full-size van.

Two other Budget Maintenance management teams also saw their daily vehicle usage supplemented with high-tech alternatives recently. The addition of two **Toyota Prius** sedans for longer trips are really contributing to the success of the fuel savings program.

"It's amazing that we can get 50 mpg on a trip to a distant job site," says **Budget Maintenance Emergency Services, Inc.** manager **Cecil Moore**. "Prior to the Prius we had to utilize a vehicle that was averaging 15mpg during the week."

The Budget staff unanimously agreed that the Prius offered a comfortable, roomy ride and, "the best thing about them," continued Moore, "is the parking."

"We're saving a lot on fuel cost but I used to have to parallel park a four-door, king cab F250 in the city," recalls Moore.

The other Toyota hybrid is being used by **Budget Maintenance Concrete Services, Inc.** and the company is currently exploring expanding the hybrid fleet as more diverse vehicles, like pickups, become available.

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