
THE CITY OF LEMOORE WITH LEPRINO FOODS, LEMOORE UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT, LEMOORE UNION ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT, CENTRAL UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT, AND ISLAND UNION ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT

CNG Station



Photo of Lemoore CNG Fueling Station provided by cngprices.com.

Lately, we've seen a very welcome decline in the price of gasoline. Nearly ten years ago, however, transportation costs were high and government, education and other industries needed to change the way their fleets operated in order to deal with the rising fuel costs. The City of Lemoore and four school districts in the area – Lemoore Union High School District, Lemoore Union Elementary School District, Central Union School District, and Island Union Elementary School District – were no strangers to these hardships. Funding for their transportation departments and divisions were cut and they needed to find a way to continue operation as close to normal as possible.

Enter Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) vehicles. The school districts already had one CNG school bus in rotation; it had been purchased over a decade earlier with grant funds. However, one CNG bus was not enough and fueling the bus was not time- or cost-efficient as the only CNG fueling station was 15 miles away. The City and the school districts needed access to funds that would supply more buses and fueling infrastructure.

Leprino Foods Company, a cheese processing plant located in the City of Lemoore, expanded in 2009 and, with the expansion, came an influx of milk truck use and traffic. The company was required to offset the increased air pollution from this expansion; they could either pay a sizable fine to the air district for the increased emissions or funnel the money towards a clean energy project in the area. Leprino Foods chose the latter and approached the City of Lemoore with \$425,000 to use towards air pollution mitigation.

The City of Lemoore worked with the four school districts to develop a construction plan for a CNG fueling station. Since the school districts could only provide the land on which the station would be built, the City had to secure additional funds. They received Construction, Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) and AB118 funds totaling \$492,000. With this, the City and school districts had over \$900,000 and an approved Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) by October 2010. This Partnership found an engineer and began construction in September 2011. All partners worked together to ensure everything was on task and the station opened in September 2012, exactly a year after construction began. The station is located at 857 Iona Ave between 19th Ave and Vine St in Lemoore, California.



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Almost immediately, the school districts increased their CNG bus fleet of one to nine. Seven school buses were purchased used through an auction and one was purchased new. This motivated the City of Lemoore to begin converting their fleet to CNG as well as purchase a CNG street sweeper and refuse truck. Within the first six months of the CNG station opening, the City and school districts dispensed nearly 12,000 gallon equivalents of CNG.

This CNG Station is used far more than expected. There is a private slow- or time-fill dispenser in the facility for school buses and a fast-fill dispenser that is open to the public. The time-fill has 20 hoses, 10 of which are used to fuel city vehicles overnight and the other 10 are used to fuel school buses overnight. The school district plans to replace older buses with CNG powered buses as needed and the time-fill system is able to expand when this need arises. The fast-fill has two 3600 pound dispenser hoses for public use and accepts Visa and MasterCard.

In addition to the 12,000 gallon equivalents dispensed by the partners over the first six months, public users have dispensed an additional 3,500 gallon equivalents. Kings Area Rural Transit is one of these public users. KART has a CNG station of its own, but when maintenance is performed, KART brings its CNG bus fleet to the Lemoore station to refuel.

The station takes in approximately \$500 each month in public CNG sales. This helps both the City and the school districts offset many maintenance costs. The City and school districts pay about \$2.00 per gallon equivalent, cutting fuel prices nearly in half. This meant they saved over \$25,000 during the first six months of operation. The school district is currently in the process of getting a grant through the City of Lemoore to expand the station storage capacity.