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American Le Mans Series Touts E85

By Scott Atherton

As the 2008 American Le Mans Series kicks off its season with the Mobil 1 Twelve Hours of Sebring, I'm reminded of a quote by the late Jerry Garcia of the Grateful Dead in describing the legendary band's appeal. "You do not merely want to be considered just the best of the best," he said. "You want to be considered the only ones who do what you do."

This quote also sums up our partnership with the Ethanol Promotion and Information Council, the consumer marketing arm of the ethanol industry. This influential organization has been at the forefront of the drive to increase consumer awareness of ethanol. In racing terms, they are in the "pole position" of this critical effort.

It is through this relationship that I am proud to announce that the American Le Mans Series now offers E85 as an official fuel for the 2008 season. This is the first time that a motorsports league has sanctioned "America's Flex-Fuel," a high-performance, environmentally friendly, renewable fuel. This year, several automotive manufacturers will run on E85, including seven-time GT1 class champion Corvette Racing.

As racing legend Bobby Rahal said in a speech to the National Press Club in 2007, "Racing is simply not just entertainment anymore." Auto racing comes in all shapes and sizes in the United States. The competition for the sports entertainment dollar is fierce. The long-term health and relevancy of the sport has grown by leaps and bounds with our commitment to renewable fuels. We play a critical role in demonstrating to consumers the environmental, economic and performance attributes of ethanol.

These are not fuel blends designed specifically for the American Le Mans Series. I have often spoken of providing a direct link from the racetrack to the filling station. In the 2007 season, the American Le Mans Series chose E10 as its "official ethanol-enriched fuel" of the series. However, this fuel is not exclusive to the race track. E10 is a blend of 90 percent gasoline and 10 percent ethanol and is widely available at many gas stations across the country. More than 6 million flexible-fuel vehicles are on the road and E85 is available at more than 1,400 refueling stations, from coast-to-coast, with more stations opening every day.

In our 10th season, the American Le Mans Series demonstrates that cars can perform at top speeds in demanding environments, utilizing a renewable fuel that's readily available.



The series showcases premier brands such as Porsche, Acura, Audi, Corvette, Ferrari and Aston Martin to name but a few. The message is clear: choosing ethanol-enriched fuel at the pump is a commitment to performance, environmental responsibility and energy independence.

There was little debate in our decision to offer E85 in our series. E85 is the cleanest-burning fuel available. With an octane rating of 100, E85 is the highest-performing fuel on the road. It has the highest oxygen content of any available fuel, allowing it to burn cleaner than conventional gasoline. The use of E85 results in a nearly 40 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. Cellulosic E85 has the capability to provide even greater reductions. While others speak of clean fuel technologies that are years away from development, E85 is available now to meet clean air challenges and provide momentum in the quest for energy security in the United States.

For more than 30 years the American consumer has endured one energy crisis after another. There have been no magic remedies or solutions. Now we have the opportunity to begin the process of taking control of our energy destiny. We are proud to be a part of this effort.

Scott Atherton is the president and chief executive officer of the American Le Mans Series. For more information on the series, visit www.americanlemans.com.