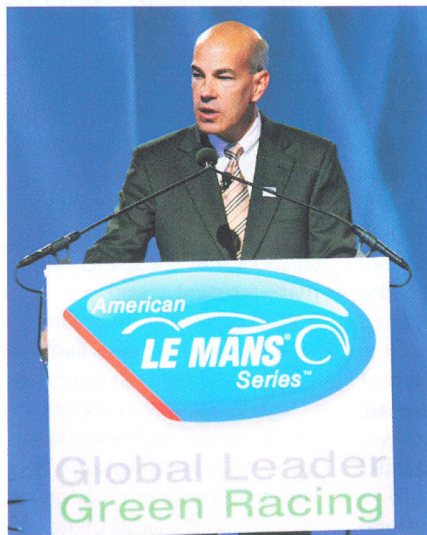


MOTORSPORTS

E85 adds to ALMS 'green racing' push



"Green racing does not have to be boring," asserted Scott Atherton, ALMS President and CEO, at the NAIAS in January.

At January's North American International Auto Show (NAIAS) in Detroit, the **American Le Mans Series** (ALMS) announced that it is partnering with the **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency** (EPA), **U.S. Department of Energy** (DOE), and **SAE International** to incorporate "green racing" principles into its 2008 racing season. The ALMS will be the first motorsports series to meet the criteria for green racing being developed by these groups.

In conjunction with the EPA, DOE, and SAE partnerships, ALMS announced the creation of the Green Racing Challenge. This new competition within the ALMS will encourage manufacturers to introduce and develop their "green" technologies and will make its debut at the series' signature event—the 1000-mi (1609-km) Petit Le Mans race to be held October 4 at Road Atlanta. Protocols and criteria for the Green Racing Challenge award are being developed by the EPA and DOE

along with SAE International and ALMS, and will be announced later this spring.

"The auto manufacturers competing in the American Le Mans Series have made it very clear that this is a direction and an overall initiative that is important to them," said Scott Atherton, President and CEO of the series. "At a time when nearly all of motorsports has lost its relevance regarding progressive technology or any connection from the racetrack to the show-room floor, the American Le Mans Series stands alone in providing a platform of solutions for our nation's automotive, transportation, and energy needs."

For the last two seasons, **Audi** has competed with a clean diesel-powered racecar. Last year, the **Ethanol Promotion and Information Council** (EPIC) and fuel supplier **VP Racing Fuels** introduced E10 (10% ethanol, 90% gasoline) to all other manufacturers who raced in the series. This season, E85 will be introduced as one of

the fuel options.

ALMS rules also support the introduction of hybrid-electric racecars.

"We are the only series in which manufacturers can aggressively develop breakthrough technologies for automobiles that consumers will ultimately buy and drive," claimed Atherton.

Corvette Racing revealed at the NAIAS that its twin **Compuware** C6.R racecars will run on cellulosic E85 for the 2008 season, after using E10 last year.

"By showcasing the capabilities of E85 ethanol...we can demonstrate the benefits of a renewable fuel that helps to reduce dependence on petroleum, helps to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases, and helps to create greater diversity in energy supplies," said **Chevrolet** General Manager Ed Peper. "Of course, performance is what counts in racing, so E85 ethanol's higher octane rating than gasoline wasn't overlooked by the Corvette Racing engineers."

Corvette Racing's transition from E10 to E85 ethanol was pretty much seamless, according to Steve Wesoloski, **General Motors** Road Racing Group Manager. "The racecars' fuel systems were already 100% compatible with ethanol, so our preparation for the change to E85 in 2008 basically came down to recalibrating the engines."

Wesoloski noted that there were a couple of minor components that could not tolerate the requirements of E85, such as the fuel pump. "We're looking at what we need to beef up that body and make it more resistant to the corrosion of E85," he said in January.

"But other than that, the next biggest challenge is fuel capacity," he added. "The sanctioning body worked

closely with the fuel supplier to develop an E85 fuel mixture that will produce approximately the same horsepower as the current E10 (100 octane). However, it's not as efficient-burning, and we're going to suffer some of the fuel-efficiency losses. So we'll probably have a larger fuel tank than our [non-E85-running] competition...so we can all run a similar amount of laps between pit stops."

KL Process Design Group of Rapid City, SD, will supply the ALMS with cellulosic E85 racing ethanol for the 2008 season. The fuel, produced from waste wood, will be used for the first time during the season-opening **Mobil 1** Twelve Hours of Sebring on March 15.

"Renewable energy from cellulosic feedstock has often been viewed as the silver bullet in our nation's efforts to reduce our dependence on foreign oil," said Vice President of Business Development for KL Process Design Group, Tom Slunecka. "There remains much work to be done, but this is a significant step in the process."

One of the benefits of cellulosic ethanol is that it reduces greenhouse gas emissions by 85% compared to reformulated gasoline, according to EPIC, citing a DOE study conducted by the **Argonne Laboratories** of the **University of Chicago**. The study also claims that cellulosic ethanol yields roughly 80% more energy than is required to grow and convert it.

At least two automakers will run cellulosic E85 racing ethanol during the 2008 season, according to EPIC: **Corvette Racing** and **Aston Martin Racing**.

by Ryan Gehm