

OPEI: Ethanol Survey Shows Consumers Not Ready for Changing Fuel



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ALEXANDRIA, Va. – A new online survey conducted by Harris Interactive on behalf of the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute (OPEI), the international trade association representing 100 small engine, utility vehicle and outdoor power equipment manufacturers and suppliers, finds that U.S. consumers are ill-prepared for the introduction of higher ethanol fuel blends.

EPA has approved the introduction of some mid-level ethanol blends (E15, E30, E85) for use in a small, subset of automobiles in an effort to comply with the federal renewable fuel mandate; the problem is that these higher ethanol fuel blends may be dispensed alongside current fuels, but they are illegal and risky to use in hundreds of millions of small engine products and applications.

This includes small engine products, such as mowers, garden tractors, chain saws, boats, snow throwers, trimmers, UTVs, power washers, blowers, chippers, grinders, generators, jaws of life, concrete saws and other compact construction equipment, as well as small engine applications such as water pumps and irrigation systems.

The study conducted on behalf of OPEI from July 31-Aug. 2, 2013, surveyed 2,040 U.S. adults ages 18 and older about their fuel buying behavior and fuel awareness at gas stations.

Key Findings of Survey

The vast majority of Americans (71 percent) are “not at all sure” if it is illegal or legal to put high level ethanol gas (i.e., anything higher than 10 percent ethanol) into engines such as those in boats, mowers, chain saws, snowmobiles, generators and other engine products.

- Nearly two-thirds (64 percent) of Americans say they assume that any gas sold at the gas station is safe for all of their cars, as well as boats,

mowers, chain saws, snowmobiles, generators and other engine products.

- For Americans who drive up to the fuel pump, price is overwhelmingly the number one thing they notice (91 percent). Whether the pump accepts credit cards (64 percent) and the octane rating (55 percent) come in second and third place.
- Only a quarter (25 percent) of these Americans notices the ethanol content.
- Seven in 10 (71 percent) Americans say they use the least-expensive grade of gasoline whenever possible.

To protect current owners and future purchasers of small engines, UTVs and outdoor power equipment, OPEI will be launching an ethanol education and consumer protection campaign at the 2013 GIE+EXPO, the annual green industry and equipment exposition, to educate consumers about the variety of fuels available at the pump, and how to identify the right fuel for their outdoor power equipment. To register for GIE+EXPO, go to www.gie-expo.com.

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