

# The Exeter News-Letter.

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## Clearing the air

After some "exhaustive" thought, we want to extend our congratulations to a corporation that is literally putting people in the driver's seat - of hybrid cars, that is. Timberland President and CEO Jeffrey Swartz and his management team are to be commended for their recent decision to offer company employees incentives to purchase hybrid vehicles. In a move that is, unfortunately, considered innovative, Timberland will give any of its 6,000 employees worldwide (including 700 at its corporate headquarters in Stratham) a \$3,000 grant to buy a hybrid - vehicles that combine electric motors and gasoline engines to generate fuel efficiency ratings topping 50 miles a gallon. And with a hybrid sticker price \$20,000 to \$35,000, \$3,000 could make the difference to some between buying a hybrid and buying a conventional car.

This decision makes so much sense. Hybrids are clearly the future of the automotive industry. We Americans love our cars, but traditional fossil fuels not only pollute our environment they leave us far too beholden to and even under the thumb of oil-producing countries. It is also wrong-headed national policy to begin oil exploration in our pristine wilderness such as the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

Hybrids offer a real first step toward energy independence -and Ford even makes an SUV model so beloved by so many.

Furthermore, each hybrid on the road is one more car that is reducing emissions and clearing our air. That is why Timberland chose to work with Portsmouth-based Clean Air-Cool Planet in putting together this initiative. Clean Air-Cool Planet works with companies like Timberland (and Shaw's Supermarkets, too, speaking of Stratham businesses), as well as colleges and communities throughout the country to promote solutions to global warming.

We are a commuting society, particularly here on the Seacoast, as the folks at Timberland certainly understand. According to the U.S. Department of Transportation and the Census Bureau, 33 percent of New Hampshire workers commute to work outside their resident community - a percentage higher than the national average. According to Clean Air-Cool Planet Executive Director Adam Markham, cars put 22 pounds of carbon into the atmosphere for every gallon of gas burned. That, quite literally, is the equivalent of a 20-pound bag of charcoal per gallon of gas.

It's safe to assume that many of the employees who work at Timberland's Stratham headquarters live elsewhere, so this move improves not only Stratham's air but the air of surrounding communities. Let's assume an employee trades in his or her car that gets 25 mpg for one that gets 50 mpg and lives, say, 10 miles from Stratham. Commuting alone will save more than 40 pounds of carbon pollution - a week. Everyone wins, not only those who get a good deal on a great car but those of us who benefit simply by breathing cleaner air.

This is not the first project in which Timberland and Clean Air-Cool Planet have teamed. Since 2001, the two have jointly undertaken various initiatives including two corporate emissions inventories; energy efficiency audits and retrofits; investments in renewable energy; and a marketing campaign for Earth Day. As CA-CP's partner, Timberland was the sole U.S. corporation represented on a panel at the launch of a worldwide business climate solutions effort in London last year, which British Prime Minister Tony Blair attended. We can only hope this fruitful partnership continues for many years to come.

At a time when corporate leaders are too often pegged as greedy and excessive - like Dennis Kozlowski at Tyco International, Timberland's Exeter neighbor - Swartz is to be commended for investing not only in his employees but in us all.

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