

Runner Goes the Distance for Clean Air

A 48-year-old St. Paul man who may once have walked a mile for a cigarette is getting ready to run 500 miles for a greater cause. Tom Andrews, an amateur ultra-marathon runner, will cross the state of Minnesota on foot in the *E85 Run for Clean Air* – an epic two-week run from Fargo, North Dakota, to the steps of the Minnesota State Capitol.

Andrews regularly runs distances of 100 miles or more. However, this ultra-marathon will combine Andrews' passion for running with his resolve to be a steward of the earth. "For me it adds a dimension that I don't get from running for myself," said Andrews. "I'm looking forward to that. I think it's a good cause."

The idea for the *E85 Run for Clean Air* germinated when Andrews approached the American Lung Association of Minnesota with an offer to run for any cause or program that needed visibility. A fifteen-year veteran of the American Lung Association Running Club, Andrews has helped raise funds for the Lung Association in the past to support their mission of promoting clean air and preventing lung disease.

Tim Gerlach, Director of Outdoor Air Programs for the ALAMN, recognized a novel way to promote the benefits of E85 fuel. He knew Andrews would be a great spokesperson. "Tom is really conscious of air quality," said Gerlach. "He's out there in it all the time."

Andrews' idea was to run across the state to raise awareness of E85 and promote its benefits. As he zigzags his way from Fargo to St. Paul, he'll be stopping at E85 gas stations, ethanol plants and car dealerships in towns he passes through to support special E85 promotions and events. His progress along Minnesota's highways and byways, as well as his well-publicized stops along the way, will be reported via radio and the Internet. Daily updates will be posted on www.CleanAirChoice.org for the public to follow along.

"When Tom found out about E85 and said it would definitely be a worthwhile cause to run for, we were thrilled," said Bryant Hokeness, MCGA President. "His willingness to run across the entire state on behalf of E85 is an affirmation of the benefits that ethanol offers, particularly to Minnesotans."

Why isn't everyone using E85?

Motor vehicle emissions are the single largest source of air pollution in Minnesota. E85, a blend of 85 percent ethanol and 15 percent gasoline, burns much cleaner than gasoline. In addition to helping the environment, it boosts the

state's rural economy because ethanol is made from a renewable resource – corn – grown here in Minnesota.

One question troubled Andrews: if E85 is cheaper, less polluting and renewable, why isn't everyone using it?

Gerlach explained that only Flexible Fuel Vehicles (FFVs) can use E85. The other barrier to wider use of this cleaner-burning fuel is a lack of public awareness. The problem is that many of the 100,000 FFV owners in Minnesota don't know about E85, don't realize they can use it, and aren't aware that E85 is now commonly available.

Andrews knew it was time for running shoe rubber to hit the road. "Just picture 100,000 vehicles on the road, each filled with E85 instead of gasoline," he said. "Think about all the oil we don't have to import or drill for to keep these vehicles rolling. More importantly, consider the positive impact this would have on our environment, especially in the Twin Cities, where my family and I work and live."

He added, "The more people that know about E85 and get on board, the better."

Roger Moore, a member of the MCGA's Expanded Uses Team, said, "Clean air is important to us. Tom's run fits well with the environmental benefits of E85." The Expanded Uses Team is working closely with county corn grower organizations to organize events at the towns on Andrews' route across the state.

A new challenge

Andrews is the student employment director at Inver Hills Community College and an employment counselor for the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development.

"I'm looking forward to getting out in beautiful Minnesota and meeting people," said Andrews. He also likes the idea of running from one point to another and seeing something new every step of the way. Usually his races, though long, take place on an extremely short route.

"I've been in a 400-mile race where I didn't go more than half a mile from the start. I've been in races where I've gone over 350 miles on a track no longer than 250 meters. The longest I've run from point to point is 62 miles."

Though Andrews regularly runs distances, he said the *E85 Run for Clean Air* will be a challenge, because of its length and the number of consecutive days he'll be pounding the pavement. "So far I've only run for six days in a big mileage race. I have a lot of respect for this run."

At the same time, he's confident that he'll complete the run without any problems. "I'm bio-mechanically sound; nothing wears out on me."

Andrews knows all about challenges. "Quitting smoking was the most difficult thing I did before I got caught up in running. I only smoked for four or five years. But [quitting smoking] eats you up inside. I had to suffer through it. With running, you cause your own misery!"

"I stress that there is a spiritual aspect to running, like enjoying God's great earth and nature. It's important as a Christian to be a good steward of our resources. That's another good reason to do this run."

Andrews said running long distances can definitely get boring. On the E85 Run for Clean Air, he added, "Running will be my job for two weeks. I may listen to tapes or pray. I'll make good use of my time." His wife Eva, also a runner, and their two-year-old son Kevin will be Andrews' road crew throughout the run. Andrews also hopes that friends will join him for segments of the run.

A race to get the word out

Luckily, owners of FFVs in Minnesota no longer face much of a challenge to find E85 for their fuel tanks. More than 80 Minnesota service stations now sell E85. Andrews and the *E85 Run for Clean Air* sponsors hope the run will encourage more FFV drivers to reduce emissions by filling up their tanks with E85 instead of gasoline.

"When it comes to competing in the fuels market, we're talking about billions of gallons and millions of dollars," said Gerlach. "It's a huge industry. We don't have budgets like that. We look for most creative ways to raise the awareness of consumers, catch their attention, help them realize they may be driving one of these FFVs and that fuel is readily available. More E85 is coming online at service stations throughout Minnesota every month."

Gerlach added that Andrews' run will be a great way to get the word out. "Here's a fellow willing to dedicate time and effort to our cause. He's out there training every day, and he'll be taking two weeks out of his life to do this. We're very grateful to have that dedication."

For information on how to determine if your vehicle can use E85 fuel, a complete list of all flexible fuel vehicles currently available and a complete listing of all E85 stations in Minnesota, visit www.CleanAirChoice.org or call (800)-LUNG-USA.

In addition to the American Lung Association of Minnesota, *E85 Run for Clean Air* sponsors include the Minnesota Corn Growers, National Ethanol Vehicle Coalition, North Dakota Corn Utilization Council, Minnesota Coalition for Ethanol and the U.S. Department of Energy Clean Cities program.

[SIDEBAR ARTICLE]

At the Finish, A New Start

Tom Andrews' epic 500-mile run will end at the State Capitol in St. Paul on September 27th. At the post-run celebration, another E85 campaign will start. The National Ethanol Vehicle Coalition (NEVC) and General Motors Corp. will launch a Minnesota initiative to promote greater use of E85. Promotions are to include a direct-mail program that will target owners of 2002 and 2003 model year GM flexible fuel vehicles.

GM produces more than a third of the more than three millions E85 flexible fuel vehicles on American roads. All 2002 and newer Chevrolet and GMC full-size SUVs and pickups equipped with the Vortec 5300 engine are E85-capable, including the Chevrolet Tahoe and Suburban, GMC Yukon and Yukon XL. The Chevrolet Silverado and GMC Sierra full-size pickups also are available with E85 capability.

The National Ethanol Vehicle Coalition is the nation's primary advocate dedicated to the use of 85 percent ethanol as a form of alternative transportation fuel. It is a coalition of corn growers, ethanol producers and auto manufacturers based in Jefferson City, Missouri. For more information, visit www.e85fuel.com.