

# Illinois Field & Bean™

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TECHNOLOGY  
THAT MAKES  
SENSE**

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DECISIONS**

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ILLINOIS SOYBEAN ASSOCIATION  
1605 Commerce Parkway, Bloomington, IL 61704

## B20 Club Member

*Ken Crowley*  
*Village of Oak Park*



PHOTO SUBMITTED BY KEN CROWLEY

“Education is our best asset. We need to keep informing the public about what biodiesel is and how it benefits environment and community.”

**KEN CROWLEY**

Village of Oak Park Fleet Services Division

Ken Crowley has lived in the same house in Oak Park, Ill., since he was four years old. Deeply rooted in his community, Crowley has spent nearly three decades as an employee of the Village of Oak Park Fleet Services Division. The municipal fleet is part of the B20 Club, sponsored by the ISA checkoff program in partnership with the American Lung Association in Illinois, to recognize fleets running on biodiesel blends of 20 percent or greater. Crowley brings true passion and a desire to improve the community to his position as superintendent of fleet services. He has become an advocate for B20 as an economical and environmentally friendly fuel.

### HOW DID THE VILLAGE OF OAK PARK DECIDE TO MAKE THE SWITCH TO BIODIESEL?

Oak Park always has been at the forefront as a green community. We place a high priority on environmental stewardship. We have a compressed natural gas station; we run many hybrid vehicles; and everything from street sweepers to snow plows run on B20. Ten years ago, a fire destroyed the storage building that housed a large portion of our vehicles. We were forced to rebuild our entire fleet. We knew environmentally conscious fuels like B20 were the way the industry was moving, so it was a natural decision to power our new fleet with biodiesel fuel.

### WHAT DOES YOUR BIODIESEL FLEET LOOK LIKE TODAY?

We run 64 fleet vehicles on biodiesel and use about 33,000 gallons of B20 annually. Our fleet includes emergency and first-response vehicles like fire engines, so it is critical for us to have a reliable fuel source. B20 meets that need. We've had no trouble finding B20 at a lower cost than straight diesel, and the reduction in emissions is clear. But it is not just about the tangible benefits. It is about protecting the environment for the younger generations in our community.

### HOW DO YOU SHARE YOUR B20 EXPERIENCE WITH OTHERS IN YOUR FIELD?

I am a member of the Municipal Fleet Management Association and speak to members about our biodiesel use. I work to disprove misconceptions, such as issues running older vehicles on B20 or fuel coagulating in winter. I want people to know biodiesel performs year-round.

### HOW HAVE YOU INFORMED OAK PARK CITIZENS ABOUT THE USE OF BIODIESEL?

Before we made the switch to biodiesel, there was little knowledge about alternative fuels. From the start, we prioritized educating the community. Open houses at our facilities allow us to introduce our biodiesel commitment, tout the low-emission vehicles in our fleet, and let people know how biodiesel directly benefits them. Education is our best asset. We need to keep informing the public about what biodiesel is and how it benefits environment and community.

### WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR OTHERS CONSIDERING BIODIESEL?

Talk to others and get your questions answered. The B20 Club has a lot of great resources and information, so it is a good place to start. Contact operators who currently use biodiesel and ask about what has worked for them. If you have a question or problem, there's probably someone out there who has already encountered it. It is better to learn from somebody else's experience. ■