

42 Volt Electrical Systems Conserve Fuel; Will They Need Maintenance?

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Where are all those hybrid cars, which were going to change the industry forever? So you ask where are all those hybrid cars? You have no doubt seen the Toyota Prius and all the media hoopla about Car of The Year and you probably said well great but it looks like a dog. Well in 2002 you are right the total sum of all hybrids sold in the US was less than 30,000. In 2003 Toyota sold less than 100,000 total hybrids. But we are in luck because the hybrids had DC motors in them too and need 0W-30 to lubricate and keep cool. Meaning the Oil Change Industry is safe still.

You have heard it said heat is the enemy, well in a DC Motor heat is very much the enemy and they usually are requiring a top brand synthetic like Mobil One. Amsoil is also hot on the scene with their formulas. Today you will not see a lot of fuel cells on the road they cost 6-10 times as much and there are few if any places to fill them up. Next year GM is introducing them to DC where there will be a fill up station and free cars for politicians to try them out. But still even McCormick from GM admits as he did in Phoenix speech this past week to his former University spectators we are looking at 2010 for GM to really ramp up and there are things to service on fuel cells, which we have discussed on this board previously. In 2002 all brands together did not equal 30,000 in 2003 Toyota alone almost got to 100,000. As far as Domestic Hybrids, well there is the Voyager and Ford Ranger all electric but mostly for show and a few government agencies on matching fund grants and tons of CNG vehicles and conversion kits out there. We recently discussed taxi-cabs, city buses and military vehicles on this web site.

In 2004 it was an incredible year for the Hybrid Car, they could not keep them on the shelves and owners usually got a \$5,000 appreciation almost immediately, even on eBay the bidding was above sticker price. Domestic Auto Manufacturers offer hybrid options on the GM Silverado Pick-up and Sierra Pick-up. Ford and their little SUV mini-Escape car. GM is offering as an option in 2006 possibly but surely by 2007 options on the Malibu, Yukon, Tahoe. Currently in 2004-2005 you will be able to get a Saturn Vue or Chevy Equinox in hybrid. Honda has several units out, but they are tough to get. Other off brands have not been very successful. All those cool Electric Cars did not pan out very well due to prototype status, cost to maintain and high electric bills, but many have been out now some 15 years. Electric Cars have been around for ever, Fuel Cell is not that new of a concept thought of some 100 years ago. We are seeing many cars now with electric power steering which add .05-2% efficiency in gas mileage in cars like the Honda S2000 and Saturn Vue and we will be seeing those 42 volt accessory cars soon which claim to add as many as 5-6 mpg. Which is very significant indeed. We shall see, but all in all it looks as if the industry of Quick Lube will be changing, just a lot slower than those "Futurists" would have you believe. It surely is past the point of science fiction, since the technology exists and the cars are available for those with big bucks and clout to find them or are ultra environmentalists, but generally they would not be popping into a quick lube service company anyway, chances are they would be higher end customers and send the nanny to the dealership for service or have a mobile service come to them on their time.

We do predict radical changes in the industry, but every one is good to go as is for about 5-7 years. Wal-Mart buyers have met with GM to see what the needs will be in the future and are considering once the new cars catch on, building Hydrogen fuel stations along with Shell who figures the conversions of the gas stations to be at about \$400,000 per each. We like to keep everyone posted on the latest and greatest findings. Hang tough this future thing is going to be a heck of a fun ride. There is tons of opportunity in change and chaos. There will be opportunities for this industry in these changes to meet demand as the demand and desire becomes more self-evident in a half a decade or so. Think about the effect on the automotive repair business? Lance Winslow - Online Think Tank forum board. If you have innovative thoughts and unique perspectives, come think with Lance; www.WorldThinkTank.net/wttbbs/