

Community & People

Senator Franken visits Ever Cat Fuels

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By Luke Reiter

U.S. Senator Al Franken visited Ever Cat Fuels in Isanti on Thursday, April 21, to hear a presentation on the company's innovations in the manufacture of biodiesel.

The visit came as part of a statewide research tour of renewable energy businesses for Franken, who was named to the Senate Energy and National Resources Committee in January.



U.S. Senator Al Franken poses with employees, as well as Isanti Mayor George Wimmer, at Ever Cat Fuels in Isanti on Thursday, April 21. Photo by Luke Reiter

Ever Cat was of interest because of the company's patented Mcgyan process of producing biodiesel. The process, which was discovered by a team led by Ever Cat's chief science officer Clayton McNeff, is unique in that it is capable of using inedible oils to make diesel fuel.

The Mcgyan process also retains its catalyst for each use rather than consuming it, making it an "ever catalyst," from which the company name is derived.

McNeff explained to the senator that Ever Cat is updating its ingredients, including a recent push to use oils derived from certain weeds like pennycress, which can be grown in harsh soils and double-cropped by farmers to avoid displacing food production.

McNeff said he believed algae would eventually become the main ingredient used by Ever Cat. According to McNeff, 10 million acres—just over 2 percent of American cropland—put to algae farming would produce 63 billion gallons of biodiesel fuel.

“So this, we believe, is our future,” McNeff said. “Algae is part of our future.”

Franken praised Ever Cat for its innovation, although he did offer one criticism of the Mcgyan process: “It sounds too much like MacGyver.”

“I think this is great,” Franken said. “It solves so many problems.”

The senator lamented recent budget cuts for renewable energy research, which he deemed “a travesty,” as he considers renewable energy to be among the most important issues for the nation, on par with job creation and education.

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