

press release



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## **FUEL AND THE FUTURE** *AND HOW FUELCARDS ARE HELPING FLEET MANAGERS CUT COSTS*

By Steve Clarke, Customer Services and Marketing Manager for ACE FUELCARDS



Back before Christmas, the Chancellor took the opportunity of his pre-budget speech to raise the duty on fuel by 1.25p per litre, bringing fuel tax in the UK to levels not seen before - and there seems likely to be little cheer in the price of fuel in the longer term for fleet managers, hauliers and others whose business is on the roads.

In the coming months and years all pointers suggest that the price of fuel will continue to rise, and rise significantly, in response to the ever-increasing global demand for oil. Against this background, market attention has focused on ways to reduce costs and closely monitor fuel usage.

Fuelcard providers have been able to assist fleet managers in both these areas, as well as providing added convenience and security against fraud. New developments in fuelcard technology will offer fleet managers and owner/drivers even greater security and control over fuel usage in the year ahead. Innovations will include the ability to limit the number of drawings of fuel per week, or restrict usage to particular days - even down to times of days - so that, for example, cards cannot be used out of normal working hours.

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In addition, card management will be in 'real time', so that managers will be able to have an immediate view of driver usage (as opposed to having to wait 24/48 hours to track fuel purchases) and will be able to cancel lost cards as soon as the loss becomes known.

## **Fuel alternatives**

The high cost of fuel, coupled with concern over the environment and global warming, has also served to concentrate minds on the development of new types of vehicle engine that either use petrol or diesel more efficiently, or run on alternative fuels.

Amongst these the hybrid, powered by a combination of electric motor and petrol engine, has gained most immediate attention. By combining petrol and electric power the hybrid gets over the problems that developers have so far come up against when constructing purely electric powered engines – that of performance (particularly in terms of speed) and the travel distance before the battery needs to be re-charged.

However, other approaches to the problem are also continuing to be developed. These include the use of LPG (liquid petroleum gas), the creation of blends and biofuels – such as sulphur-free fuel, biodiesel and bioethanol – and a number of different hydrogen systems.

A lot of engineering resources are being committed to finding and developing an alternative vehicle fuel. The problem at the moment is that it is too early in the game to find a consensus on the best way forward. My feeling is that no clear, definitive solution is likely to appear for some time to come. Indeed, perhaps all the above will turn out to be only a temporary 'stop-gap' to a new, much cleaner, more efficient fuel that science is yet to develop.

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This leaves developers and suppliers with a ‘chicken and egg’ problem of early stage adoption: how to get filling stations to stock alternative fuels if few people own the vehicles? And how to get consumers to buy alternative fuelled cars if drivers can’t find fuel?

Fuelcards can have a positive role to play in helping to overcome this problem. By creating a network and buying in bulk, fuelcard providers can help drivers find the locations of convenient filling stations, and assist in keeping the price of fuel – whatever fuel it is – as low as possible, thereby encouraging more take-up of new technologies.

## Simply saving

However, in the shorter term, rising fuel prices have served to put no-frills cost-saving at the top of the agenda for companies running fleets. Abbey Fuelcards has responded to this market demand by creating the ACE card, a fuelcard designed to offer simplicity and savings: weekly savings on fuel, together with all the security advantages of card transactions over cash.



Draw low-cost fuel with the ACE card and there is

- **No charge** for the card (the monthly £1.00 fee is waived if you use the card just once in the month)

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- **No charge** for secure and confidential online access 24/7 for all account management services, including ordering and stopping cards, account checking etc., *and*
- **FREE Credit.** All invoices are paid automatically by Direct Debit, so the ACE card is hassle-free and means you don't pay for fuel purchases for up to 2 weeks.



**For more details on the Ace Fuelcard**

**call 0845 630 1312**

**or email [sales@ace-fuelcards.co.uk](mailto:sales@ace-fuelcards.co.uk) or visit our**

**website at [www.ace-fuelcards.co.uk](http://www.ace-fuelcards.co.uk)**