

# CLEAN 100 OCTANE COALITION UPDATE

By Dave Duntz, AOA Rep

## 100VLL Gains Momentum

In December 2010, the ASTM gave initial approval to a new fuel specification called 100 VLL (Very Low Lead). The new specification was requested by a coalition including AOPA, EAA, GAMA, NATA and other industry groups. Without realizing it, you may already be using a fuel that meets this new specification, even though it was 100LL that you put in your Aerostar. The reason is that D910, the 100LL spec, requires a minimum of 99.6 octane and no more than 2 mL (or .56g/L) of lead per gallon. Turns out differences in the refining process have allowed refiners to use varying levels of lead to meet the required octane. Some may use near the max. Some may use half. Some may use three quarters of the maximum. The new 100VLL spec reduces the max amount of lead allowed by 19% but still requires the same minimum octane. The impact on those refiners who have not used 81% or less of the max allowable lead in the past is not yet fully known.

In a recent teleconference between representatives in the Clean 100 Octane Coalition and Mike Kraft, Senior Vice President and General Manager of Lycoming, Mr Kraft was very supportive of the new fuel spec and confirmed that all high performance Lycoming engines can run on 100VLL. However, it is generally agreed that 100VLL is an interim fuel that is a step in the direction of achieving a no lead aviation fuel. It has been reported that the EPA sees 100VLL as a positive step and a demonstration of the general aviation community's serious intent to move toward a no lead solution. This will buy credibility and time to reach the final solution. It is not known at this time how quickly 100VLL will be formally posted at the pump, since it is already being pumped (and has been for years) in many places as 100LL. Fortunately, it doesn't really matter as its use will be transparent to the pilot and mechanic.

## Aviation Community Influence Is Important

The user community's pressure should not be underestimated and is vital for continued progress. Considerable pressure has been placed on the FAA to take a more dynamic role in determining the future fuel. Recently the FAA announced the formation of an FAA/Industry committee, known as the Unleaded Avgas Transition Aviation Rulemaking Committee (ARC), to advise the FAA Administrator on how to tackle the problem. At the same time there are advocates in the general aviation community who are backing various alternatives to a single 100 UL (Unleaded) solution. Some are campaigning for an unleaded MOGAS solution. Others want to see a 94UL solution. A continued effort to educate the non -100 octane community on the need for a single fuel solution is needed.

A dual fuel solution has ~~prohibitive~~ distribution economics ~~which would~~ result in ~~higher~~ pump prices and ~~very few~~ locations carrying ~~both fuels~~. If a low octane becomes the single solution the need for engine modifications arises and a subsequent reduction of

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power and loss of performance results. In the teleconference with Mr. Kraft, he reiterated that high performance Lycomings require 100 octane. He warned that if the voice of general aviation becomes split and divided, it will reduce the influence needed to solve the problem, and could have a major adverse effect on the health of the entire general aviation economy. The Clean 100 Octane Coalition plans to be active at Sun-n-Fun and Oshkosh to promote the single 100 octane solution. I will keep you posted, or you can visit the Clean 100 Octane Coalition website, [www.100octaneformyplane.com](http://www.100octaneformyplane.com) .