R013-A: Comprehensive Statewide Higher-Level Blend Ethanol Marketing Campaign
Submitted by ND Ethanol Council
Principal Investigator: Deana Wiese
Request for $199,600; Total Project Costs $424,000

**Technical Advisor Comments**

- All 3 reviewers recommended fund.
- Applicant will provide a 53% match. 50% of the match is cash, and the remaining 3% is in-kind (ALA & NDEC).
- All 3 reviewers noted that the proposal was based on research.
    - One reviewer stated, "…This was not a pie-in-the-sky approach. Very real statistics and research were utilized…"
- 1 reviewer was concerned about the tentativeness of the second year's match.
- 1 reviewer was concerned that the root cause of low usage was not identified.
    - The applicant has clarified that the survey indicated the main reason was mileage/value. Additionally, ND previously lacked the infrastructure required to sell higher blends. This has changed with the Blender Pump Program.
- All 3 reviewers felt the methodology was above average.
    - 1 reviewer commented that starting with 2 dealerships was a realistic approach.
- 1 reviewer commented on a lack of detail regarding budget items.
    - A more detailed budget has been provided.
- 2 reviewers would have liked more information regarding communication among the stakeholders, including designation of personnel responsible for each action item.
- 1 reviewer expressed concern over buy-in from the dealerships.
- 1 reviewer stated that success of the campaign will be dependent on selecting the right marketing firm and wanted more information on how the firm will be selected.
    - The applicant has stated that an RFP has gone out. The successful marketing firm will be from North Dakota and be evaluated based on its demonstrated success with ethanol marketing campaigns.

**Technical Advisor Recommendations**

Fund. All three reviewers strongly endorsed the proposal. The strategy of the campaign is based on current public opinion research, which greatly enhances the proposal.

Another strength of the proposal is that the project involves all of the state's ethanol industry stakeholders. However, since so many groups are involved, a more detailed communication plan would strengthen the proposal. It is unclear who is responsible for each task. If this information is not provided in the applicant's presentation, the Council may want to consider adding it as a contingency. The rest of the reviewers concerns have been addressed in the clarification.

**Suggested Contingencies If Funded**

- None