



*Southern Growth Policies Board presents
Southern Energy: Abundant, Affordable and American –
2009 Innovator Award Winner*

GulfSouth Youth Biodiesel Project

Operation Reach

Objective: To engage, empower and inspire youth involvement in community development and social entrepreneurship through Green Collar job training in which youth, ages 14 to 25, learn the ins and outs of how to turn raw organic materials into eco-friendly alternative fuels.



Operation REACH, Inc. is a non-profit community education resource that develops model programs for youth and families to create opportunities and transform lives. The GulfSouth Youth Biodiesel Project fills a critical need by developing job skills among urban youth for the growing 21st century green economy. Youth involved with the program gain valuable skills, ranging from leadership and business savvy to mechanics, chemistry and engineering. Young people learn the chemistry and engineering required for alternative fuel production, the mechanics of diesel engines, and the environmental impacts of both eco-friendly biofuels and traditional petroleum-based fuels.

Participating youth secure commitments from local restaurants, caterers and cafeterias to provide used cooking oil/fryer grease to the project. Suppliers are equipped with a five gallon Gulf Youth Action Corps Biodiesel Project barrel that youth and their adult supporters pick up weekly. Then, under the direction of trained chemists and fuel production professionals, youth participants convert the used cooking oil and fryer grease into eco-friendly biofuel. Youth participants also meet on a regular basis to conduct planning and receive training in the basics of biodiesel production, leadership, business development, management, sales and marketing.

