

### [Alternative fuel station offers options](#) (Lexington Dispatch – July 15, 2011)

By Viki Broughton Hodges

"We're North Carolina's first alternative fuel station with alternatives," said Mayne Hill, president of Hill Oil Co., which has offices in Lexington and Winston-Salem, at a ribbon-cutting ceremony Friday at Sparky's Marketplace, a new Gulf service station, convenience store and car wash developed by Hill Oil

on Old Salisbury Road near the Reserve at Regent Center apartments and Sapona Country Club. The Gulf station, which has been open for about a month, is the only one in the state so far to sell three different blends of ethanol — E85 (85 percent ethanol), E30 (30 percent ethanol) and E15 (15 percent

ethanol). The new station also features, in addition to regular Gulf brands, B20 (20 percent biodiesel) and B5 (5 percent biodiesel). Ethanol is primarily derived from corn, and biodiesel includes soybean oil, some from North Carolina farmers. County and state government officials as well as members of the general public gathered at the event to celebrate the opening of the first alternative fuel station in the Piedmont Triad and only the 17th in the state. Lexington Mayor John Walser said his favorite part of being a public official is being part of groundbreaking and ribbon cuttings "but this is groundbreaking in another way," he said, noting being the site of an alternative fuel station helps put the city in a progressive light. County Commissioner Fred McClure said the county has long been progressive with compressed natural gas-fueled county vehicles and as the home of the state's largest solar farm. He praised Hill Oil for taking the lead in another green energy initiative, which he said boosts business prospects. "When businesses come in they look at that," McClure said. "They can see we're on the cutting edge." Hill thanked all the government officials who worked with Hill Oil to make Sparky's a reality, including a representative from Rep. **Mel Watt's** office, noting

**Watt** support ed funding the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, the federal stimulus program. ARRA funded a 15-month, \$500,000 initiative to jump-start six unique clean transportation projects around the state, including Sparky's, as part of the Alternative Fuel/Advanced Vehicle Technology project administered by the N.C. Solar Center's Clean Transportation Program with funding from the N.C. Department of Commerce State Energy Division. "This project is about alternatives and change," Hill said, noting the energy industry is changing and the future belongs to those who are flexible and embrace change as consumers look for options. Ward Lenz, State Energy Division Director for the N.C. Department of Commerce, praised Hill Oil for "giving consumers a real choice." He said the State Energy Division has primarily focused on promoting energy efficiency in state and local government buildings as well as public schools to save taxpayers' dollars but has also started partnering with private industry. "It's only with entrepreneurs like you that this kind of thing happens," Lenz said.

