

Late in 2011, a Nebraska motorist stopped at a service station to fill up with ethanol blended fuel. One of the gallons going into that tank was the ten billionth sold in the state.

The milestone was reached after 34 years and 200 billion miles traveled on the state's roads. Sale of the second 10 billion gallons of home grown fuel is likely to occur more quickly.

In 1979, 60,000 gallons were sold. In 2012, projections show Nebraska drivers will purchase nearly 700 million gallons.

Last year, production from the state's 25 ethanol plants topped 1.9 billion gallons according to preliminary data from the Nebraska Ethanol Board. Ninety-one percent of the state's production goes to U.S. domestic markets, five percent is shipped overseas. Four percent goes in Nebraska fuel tanks and, because of lower costs at the pump, saves motorists some \$55 million dollars annually.

According to the Energy Information Administration, 2011 U.S. ethanol production was 14.4 billion gallons. The country's total annual motor fuel usage is around 134 billion gallons. Ethanol accounts for 10.7 percent of total U.S supply.

Loran Schmit, a former member of the Nebraska Legislature who laid the ground work for the development of Nebraska's industry, is gratified to see continued growth of the ethanol industry. "Our persistence paid off. Ethanol is a major boost to our economy. Continued expansion of the ethanol industry will provide greater benefits for agriculture and energy security," said Schmit.