

**Fueling demand**  
The opening of Gulf Hydrocarbon gives drivers of high-performance cars a new source of specialized fuels.

PAGE 10A

**IN THE SPOTLIGHT:**

The booming energy sector is luring major national public relations firms back to Houston/PAGE 2A

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## Gulf Hydrocarbon accelerates offerings with new storefront

BY FORD GUNTER

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Racing enthusiasts and high-performance car drivers now have the option of buying their fuels, oils and additives from Houston-based Gulf Hydrocarbon Inc. in a retail setting.

Previously available only online, Gulf Hydrocarbon will celebrate the grand opening of its first storefront location in Houston on Nov. 17. Opening as Hyperfuels, the company's 12969 West Hardy Road location will sell fuels, biodiesel, additives and lubricants for high-performance vehicles.

"We saw a market and we knew we had to have a storefront," says Nicole Haagenon of Sage Public Relations Group, which represents Gulf Hydrocarbon.

The 2,400-square-foot store will employ two and will double as a new corporate headquarters and distribution center of sorts. Gulf Hydrocarbon President Jess Hewitt and his six-person staff recently consolidated operations at the north Houston site, and will now handle all Internet retail from there as well.

As far as retailing racing fuel goes, Hyperfuels has limited competition in the Heights and Tomball, but Hewitt says he is the first to sell in pre-sealed drums rather than customers purchasing the fuel and transferring it on-site into their own containers.

"The way we're distributing now is so new, no one else is doing this," he says. "The old-fashioned way is filling people's containers as a secondary or tertiary business, but our primary business at the retail center is selling pre-sealed racing fuels."

An e-tailer since 1998, Hewitt cites two factors as the primary drivers for a physical store.

One is the hazardous materials fees assessed to the buyers by UPS and FedEx, which is usually \$20 per item. Considering a five-gallon can of biodiesel can cost \$25, the fee turned off some consumers.

There are also regional restrictions



Hewitt

PARENT COMPANY: Gulf Hydrocarbon Inc.

FOUNDED: 1998

EMPLOYEES: Six, with plans to expand to nine

**HEADQUARTERS HISTORY**

STARTED IN: A Baytown petroleum terminal

MOVED TO: Bay City

MOVED AGAIN TO: Houston, north downtown

AND AGAIN TO: Houston, near Intercontinental Airport

NEW HEADQUARTERS: 12969 West Hardy Road (headquarters, retail storefront, distribution warehouse)

ANNUAL REVENUE FOR GULF HYDROCARBON: \$14 million in 2006

THE FUTURE: "Our near-term goals are to create a new fuel delivery system that will enhance the convenience to the customer," says Jess Hewitt, Hyperfuels president.

"Depending on the success of the Houston store, we do have contingency plans to expand to the East and West coasts, as well as two primary markets that are no longer served with race fuel locally."

— usually in urban areas — on storing hazardous fuels.

"The new manner is much safer because we're delivering it pre-packaged," Hewitt says.

The fuels can be stored for up to two years and can run in normal cars, meaning the 55-gallon drums could provide a hedge for savvy shoppers looking to cut down on gasoline expenses in a time of ever-increasing costs.

While the biodiesel, purchased from only domestic producers in Texas, Louisiana, Indiana, Ohio, Illinois and Virginia, is among the cheapest products, a five-gallon can of nitromethane can run around \$200.

SynDiesel, a synthetic diesel with a 63 cetane rating, can be stored for up to 10 years. Methanol, nitromethane and biodiesel are also for sale in five- and 55-gallon pre-sealed drums, and oils and additives can be purchased or ordered to locations around the country, either through the storefront or the company's Web sites, [www.hyperfuels.com](http://www.hyperfuels.com) and [www.buyracegas.com](http://www.buyracegas.com).

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