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Anna's delivery still green after 15

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Green Grease Monkey trucks are eco-friendly

By Laura Finaldi, News Staff

As springtime begins, keeping the air fresh and clean is a main concern, especially as Earth Day approaches. Several Boston restaurants have been implementing green practices in their dining rooms and recipes for a healthier, more eco-friendly spring.

One of these restaurants, Mexican restaurant Anna's Taqueria, which recently celebrated 15 years in business, Anna's has worked with Green Grease Monkey, a Boston-based company that specializes in converting diesel-powered vehicles to run on vegetable oil, and converted their 14-box truck used to transport food from the market to the restaurant to run in this way, according to a press release from Anna's.



Photo Courtesy: Anna's Taqueria

The company has worked with several local restaurants and food vendors to promote sustainability and other eco-friendly practices since its start in 2004. Green Grease Monkey offers maintenance for companies who use their vegetable oil method and help with the collection of said oil. They have worked with several Boston restaurants, including Tremont 647 in the South End, Soulfire in Allston and Tresca, Taranta and Graffiti in the North End.

Mike Kamio, founder and owner of Anna's Taqueria, said the restaurant's vegetable oil-powered truck has two engines: one for diesel and one for vegetable oil. The truck needs to be turned on and off on diesel, but it can run all day on vegetable oil, which Anna's gets by filtering its own used cooking oil.

"Some people thought we were crazy in the beginning, but it turned out to be environmentally good and economically good and an honest benefit for us," Kamio said. "We fill up the diesel twice a year, so you can see how much we don't spend on diesel or how much we don't use diesel as a fuel."

Patrick Keaney, one of the founders of Green Grease Monkey, said the idea of an engine that runs on something other than standard gas oil is not a new concept, rather the idea has been around since the first engines were invented. Keaney said Anna's use of the vegetable oil-powered truck is a great thing for the environment.

"The fact that they're using their own waste product as fuel for its trucks is admirable," he said. "More restaurants should follow their lead."

Anna's also takes recycling very seriously, Kamio said. The restaurant recycles its glass, plastic and cardboard.

"We try to recycle as much as we can," he said. "It also helps our garbage bill because it's only restaurant garbage waste that's going to the garbage company. So you know there is a conscious effort to recycle. It may not be 100 percent but it's 80 percent."

Kristin Shearer, a middler business major, said she has been to Anna's but did not notice that it was any more green than Qdoba or Boloco.

"They should promote the truck more," she said. "I just knew they had good food. I didn't know they were doing all of that stuff too."