

Lima billboard captures attention of Ford engineer who has idea for cars as water sources

17 September 2016, by Nancy Owano



Ford's prototype On-the-Go H2O system collects, filters and pumps water directly to a faucet hanging over the cupholders.

(Tech Xplore)—On-the-Go H2O. It's a catchy rhyme but also a catchy idea hatched by an engineer at Ford. He has thought up an idea for an in-car water dispenser. No store-bought plastic bottles of water needed.

Condensation from vehicle air conditioners usually just drips to the pavement below. What if we did not let that go to waste?

A couple of years ago, said Doug Martin, Ford Powertrain Controls Engineer, in a video posted earlier this month from Ford Media, he came across a document describing a billboard in Lima, Peru, that condensed [water](#) out of thin air, dispersing it to residents who lacked access to clean water.

Martin said, "I thought, well, cars go through thin air too and why not do something with cars like that."

This thought marked the beginning of his pursuit to work out On the Go H2O. It is a system that recovers water from the air conditioning system, collects it, pumps it through a filter, and provides it to the passenger for drinking.

(So the thirsty driver is able to take advantage of the water supply coming from a byproduct of the car's air conditioning system.)

Ford said, "Condensation from vehicle air conditioners, which usually just drips to the pavement below, could be used in much the same way. Martin worked with colleague John Rollinger to bring the idea to life, creating a prototype system that collects, filters and pumps the condensation directly to a faucet located inside the car."

The video notes pointed out how clean drinking water is not readily available in some locations. Travelers would benefit from a convenient way to have water available to them while on the road, and without the need to bring it with them.

"It works by collecting water created from the AC condenser, pumping it through a filter for purification and then dispensing it into a cup located in the center [console](#)."

(*Autoblog* said, "the water collects in a pan where it is then pumped through a tube, into a filter, and out of a dispenser found at Home Depot.")

The company story on his idea commented that "This Ford innovator envisions a day in which people might say, 'I can't believe we used to waste all that water.'"

But wait a minute. Don't remote areas have roadside stands and market shops selling bottled water?

Martin discovered that a car can produce more than 64 ounces of water per hour, the equivalent of nearly four water bottles.

Autoblog added that although we may not find these features available on Ford vehicles soon, they all seemed feasible.

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Martin's idea to turn cars into a source of water boils down to the reality that fresh water is a scarce resource.

"Naturally, this means fewer roadside stops to pick up [bottled water](#) on a road trip, a nice convenience, along with fewer plastic bottles filling trash heaps. But the benefits extend much further, potentially [curbing](#) the global water crisis, which, according to the World Health Organization, affects one in 10 people and leaves hundreds of millions without [clean drinking water](#)."

The Ford engineer likes the thought of this one day making a difference somewhere. His story was part of Ford's annual "Further with Ford" event. Joel Stocksdale, associate editor at *Autoblog*, reported on the event.

"At the end of the day, three Ford engineers presented some unusual ideas they've been working on," said Stocksdale, and Martin's story was one of them. "Basically, it consisted of a drinking [water](#) tap in the center console. Considering the addition of in-car refrigerators to high-end luxury cars, this feature could be a great complement. But that wasn't the intention of the engineer, who imagined this as a way to save waste water and possibly even provide a way to get [clean water](#) in areas where its tough to come by."

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