

# Component of asphalt eyed as new fuel source

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The pavement material that cars drive on may wind up in their fuel tanks as scientists seek ways of transforming asphaltenes -- the main component of asphalt -- into an abundant new source of fuel, according to the cover story in the current issue of Chemical & Engineering News, ACS' weekly newsmagazine.

C&EN senior editor Celia Henry Arnaud notes that rich supplies of asphaltene exist in Canada, Mexico, and Venezuela. But converting this heavy, sticky material into something other than "blacktop" remains a challenge. Sometimes derided as "the cholesterol of petroleum," asphaltenes are difficult to extract from deposits and clog refinery pipes, the article notes.

Scientists, however, are using newly crafted analytical techniques to probe the molecular structure of asphaltenes in the quest for better ways of producing and refining asphaltene-rich [fuel](#) sources in the future.

More information: "Digging into Asphaltenes",  
[pubs.acs.org/cen/coverstory/87/8738cover.html](https://pubs.acs.org/cen/coverstory/87/8738cover.html)

Source: American Chemical Society ([news](#) : [web](#))

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