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EPA News Release

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Three Idaho school districts graduate to cleaner buses thanks to a \$250,000 EPA grant

\$250,000 in EPA funding with \$12,500 in matching funds

(Idaho City, ID, - April 21, 2006) As the country prepares to celebrate Earth Day, students at the Basin, Meridian and Idaho Falls School Districts will be breathing easier, thanks to a \$250,000 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) "Clean School Bus USA" grant.

The EPA grant – together with \$12,500 from state and local partners – will allow the three school districts to purchase and install Diesel Oxidation Catalysts (DOC) and Close Crankcase Ventilation Systems (CCV) at an estimated cost of \$2,500 per bus. A total of 87 buses will be retrofitted with both DOCs and CCVs.

The diesel oxidation catalysts that will be installed on the buses will reduce emissions of fine particulates by at least 30 percent, hydrocarbons by at least 50 percent and carbon monoxide emissions by at least 30 percent.

Also as part of the initiative, diesel engine pre-heaters will be installed on nine buses in Basin School District # 72 to conserve fuel and improve air quality by reducing idle emissions.

"Retrofitting these buses is one of the best things we can do for our kids' health and the environment," said Michael Bogert, EPA's Regional Administrator in Seattle. "The work that is funded by this grant will be a great benefit not only to the three school districts, but also to the surrounding communities."

Each school day, 2,378 buses transport more than 111,000 students in Idaho. These buses travel approximately 28.6 million miles per year. After 12 years of school, children in Idaho spend approximately 16 million hours in school buses.

More than 90 percent of Idaho school buses have diesel engines. Diesel school buses routinely expose children to soot (particulate matter) and smog-forming pollutants (nitrogen oxides and non-methane hydrocarbons).

Exposure to diesel exhaust exacerbates the symptoms of asthma, bronchitis and pneumonia. Asthma is the most common long-term childhood respiratory disease affecting approximately 10 percent of Idaho's children and is the number one cause of absenteeism in schools.

This year, EPA awarded 37 grants across the nation totaling \$7.5 million as part of the Clean School Bus USA program. The initiative encourages policies and practices to eliminate unnecessary school bus idling, install effective emission control systems on newer buses and replace the oldest buses with cleaner diesel or compressed natural gas powered buses.

These grants also compliment similar efforts by the West Coast Collaborative to reduce diesel emissions from other sectors such as: agriculture, construction, locomotives & rail, marine vessels & ports and trucking.

For more information about Clean School Bus USA visit:

<http://www.epa.gov/cleanschoolbus>

For more information about the West Coast Collaborative visit:

<http://www.westcoastcollaborative.org>

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