

Texas Clean School Bus Program Reports Success on Round Two

The second round of funding for the Texas Clean School Bus program came to an end on Dec. 15. This program primarily assists school districts in reducing the exposure of school children to diesel exhaust in and around diesel-fueled school buses. The TCEQ received from school districts over \$9 million in grant application requests for assistance in retrofitting older school buses with equipment that reduces harmful emissions.



Funding was awarded on a first-come, first-served basis. All applications that were postmarked by Dec. 15 that will not receive funding have been placed on a wait list.

The Texas Clean School Bus Web site offers links to other programs throughout Texas that may provide funding opportunities to school districts. For more information, visit <www.texascleanschoolbus.org>.

Replacing Your Car or Truck Just Got Easier

Are you planning to replace your car or truck in 2009? Here are a couple of questions to ask yourself first: Is your vehicle 10 years old or older? Has it failed an emissions test? If so, you may qualify for up

to \$3,500 towards replacing your vehicle with the TCEQ's AirCheck Texas Drive a Clean Machine program. This program helps our state reduce pollution and clean the air by removing older, more polluting vehicles from Texas roadways in counties with high amounts of ground-level ozone.

To qualify for vouchers, your vehicle must be registered in one of the designated counties in the Houston-Galveston-Brazoria, Dallas-Fort Worth, or Austin areas, and you must fit the income eligibility scale. For example, a Houston, DFW, or Austin family of four with an annual net income of \$63,600 can apply.

The vouchers provide the following:

- \$3,000 for a car, current model year or up to three model years old
- \$3,000 for a truck, current model year or up to two model years old
- \$3,500 for a hybrid vehicle, current or previous model year

All of the vehicles being replaced are scrapped to make sure they will no longer be used.

As newer cars and trucks are bought each year, the overall Texas fleet gets cleaner. Newer cars and trucks are equipped with high-tech emission controls; any vehicle that is model 1996 or newer has the benefit of onboard diagnostics.

AirCheck Texas Drive a Clean Machine may be able to help you maximize your savings on a new car or truck while you help reduce our air pollution. For more information and a complete list of qualifications, visit <www.driveacleanmachine.org>.

Funding Available to Upgrade Vehicles and Equipment

The TCEQ's Texas Emissions Reduction Plan (TERP) Program is now accepting applications for both the Emissions Reduction Incentive Grant (ERIG) Program and the Rebate Grants Program.



The TERP includes a number of voluntary financial incentive and assistance programs to help improve the air quality in Texas. The goals of the TERP are to:

- Ensure that the air in Texas is safe to breathe and meets minimum federal standards established under the Federal Clean Air Act;
- Develop multipollutant approaches to solving the state's environmental problems; and
- Adequately fund research and development that will make Texas a leader in new technologies that can solve its environmental problems while creating new business and industry in the state.

The ERIG Program provides grants to eligible projects in nonattainment areas and affected counties. The grants offset the incremental costs associated with reducing emissions of nitrogen oxides (NOx) from high-emitting, internal combustion engines. ERIG applications are being accepted through Feb. 20.

The Rebate Grants Program is a simplified application process under the ERIG Program. Rebate Grants are only available for diesel on-road and non-road replacement and repower projects. Rebate Grant applications will be accepted until June 30, 2009, or until all funding has been distributed.

To learn more about the available grants, find out whether you qualify, or to attend a free Grant Application Workshop, visit <www.terpgrants.org>.

Recognizing Volunteer Participation for Mercury Switch Success

The Mercury Convenience Switch Recovery Program is designed to remove mercury-containing switches from scrap and retired vehicles. These switches were used for convenience lighting in hoods and trunks and in some anti-lock braking systems of many vehicles manufactured prior to 2003.

Working in cooperation with the End of Life Vehicle Solutions Corporation, Texas vehicle recyclers and metal-recycling facilities can receive monetary and regulatory incentives for their voluntary participation in the program. In 2008, Texas participants removed 26,446 switches, which translates to an estimated 58.2 pounds of mercury removed from the returned switches.

If you are interested in participating in the Mercury Convenience Switch Recovery Program, or to find out more information, visit <www.tceq.state.tx.us/assistance/sblga/mercury_switches.html>.

Last Chance!

Picking up after your pet can help keep waste from washing into storm drains and polluting rivers, lakes, and drinking-water sources. If you are looking for a great tool to encourage Texans to pick up their pet's waste, order FREE copies of the poster, "If You Think Picking Up Dog Poop is Unpleasant, Try Drinking It" (GI-307). To order, send your name and shipping address to <educate@tceq.state.tx.us> (with GI-307 as the subject).



EPA's CARE Grants Available

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is making available approximately \$3 million in 2009 to support community-based partnerships that work to reduce pollution at the local level. Grants will be awarded through the EPA's Community Action for a Renewed Environment (CARE) program.

Applications for the CARE grants are due March 16. Eligible applicants include county and local governments, tribes, non-profit organizations, and universities.

For more information, or to apply for a CARE grant, visit <www.epa.gov/air/grants_funding.html#0902>.

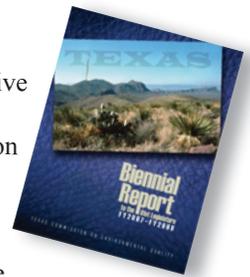
Save the Date! TCEQ's Environmental Trade Fair and Conference

Make plans now to attend Texas' premier environmental educational forum May 12-14, 2009, at the Austin Convention Center.

For up-to-date information, visit <www.tceq.state.tx.us/assistance/events/etfc/etf.html>.

Highlighted TCEQ Publications

TCEQ Biennial Report to the 81st Legislature, SFR-057, is published every December before a regular Texas legislative session, as required by the Texas Water Code, Section 5.178. The latest submission describes the TCEQ's Fiscal 2007 and 2008 programs, services, and results.



A Guide to Pollution Prevention Planning, RG-409, details the steps in the pollution prevention planning process for facilities that must comply under the Waste Reduction Policy Act—small and large quantity generators and those who report on the Toxics Release Inventory Form R.

The John Graves Scenic Riverway: A Report to the 81st Legislature, SFR-087, reports on the success of water quality protection programs developed under SB1354, which designated a segment of the Brazos River as the John Graves Scenic Riverway.

To order TCEQ publications, visit <www.tceq.state.tx.us/publications>.

Take Care of Texas Tips

At Home Maintain Your Vehicle

With proper maintenance, such as changing your oil, checking your tire pressure, and replacing filters, you can reduce your car's emissions and improve gas mileage up to 5 percent, which can save you up to 35 cents per gallon of fuel used. A poorly maintained vehicle can release as much as 10 times the emissions of a well-maintained one. Follow the manufacturer's instructions on routine maintenance. If you drive a well-maintained car with a 13-gallon gas tank and fill your tank once a week, you could save \$4.55 a week.



Around the Office Change Your Settings

Set your printers, copiers, and faxes to "duplex," allowing printing on both sides, which can cut paper cost nearly in half. Also, activating standby settings on equipment can reduce energy usage even more by diminishing the power when the device is not in use. Copiers, laser printers, faxes, and other office equipment can save up to 66 percent of their 24-hour power consumption if on only during office hours.

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