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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MEDIA ADVISORY/PHOTO OPPORTUNITY

DEQ and LRAPA to Honor Oakridge School District for Curbing School Bus Pollution. Event set for 9:30 a.m., Oct. 21 in Oakridge

What: The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality Clean Diesel Recognition Program will honor the Oakridge School District for protecting students' health by voluntarily reducing soot emissions from diesel school buses. The district retrofitted school buses with equipment that cut diesel emissions inside and outside of the buses.

Photo opportunity: School buses with diesel retrofit equipment.

Who: Keith Andersen, DEQ Western Region Division Administrator and Merlyn Hough, Director, Lane Regional Air Protection Agency (LRAPA); Oakridge School District officials

When: 9:30 a.m., Wednesday, Oct. 21

Where: Oakridge High School
47997 W. 1st St., Oakridge

For more information: Sally Markos, Public Affairs Manager, LRAPA, (541) 736-1056 ext. 217. For more information about the DEQ Fleet Forward Recognition Program, contact Kathleen Cochran (503) 229-6833, or visit <http://www.deq.state.or.us/daq/diesel/recognition.htm>. For more information about the EPA Clean School Bus USA Program go to <http://www.epa.gov/cleanschoolbus/index.htm>.

Background: School-aged children are exposed to diesel exhaust while riding in school buses, from idling buses waiting outside schools, or from exhaust that drifts from idling buses into school buildings. The exhaust is linked to worsening asthma and other serious respiratory symptoms, heart problems and cancer.

Exposure to diesel exhaust poses a unique health threat to children as their lungs are developing and they breathe faster and more frequently than adults.

(More)

Fortunately, there are solutions that provide immediate major benefits. DEQ secured U.S. Environmental Protection Agency funding as part of the Clean School Bus USA program to install exhaust controls on several school buses in the Oakridge School District. Now the ride to school is not only safe, it is much healthier.

The Tillamook, NeahKahNie and Nestucca School Districts in Tillamook County also received grant funds to install diesel pollution controls on school buses.

This event recognizes the school for being an environmental leader by participating in this clean diesel project, and for qualifying for the DEQ Fleet Forward program that recognizes public and private fleets that voluntarily reduce their diesel exhaust. All the participating schools qualify at the highest level of the program.

In June 2009, the Oregon legislature passed a law requiring that all diesel school buses be retrofitted with advanced exhaust controls by 2017. Buses that are too old to be retrofitted must be replaced by 2025.

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