



# Newsletter

## Environmental Connection

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Sponsored by the Utah Department of Environmental Quality

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### Cleaner School Buses on its Way

By the start of next school year, about one fourth of Utah’s school buses could be cleaner thanks to a pot of money the Division of Air Quality expects to receive.

The Division of Air Quality (DAQ) announced in July that it plans to receive about \$2.3 million in federal, state and local grants to retrofit roughly 1,150 diesel-powered school buses with pollution control devices.

“We have been working with communities and organizations to secure this funding,” said Cheryl Heying, director of DAQ. “This is truly a partnership effort that will make a difference in our air quality.”

School districts will be able to help select the vendor and work with them to install the recommended technology – diesel oxidation catalyst and closed crankcase ventilation systems – which reduces pollution in the bus cabin as well as the amount of pollutants being emitted from the tailpipe.

“What these devices are designed to do is release 40 percent less particulate matter into the air,” said Mat Carlile, environmental scientist with DAQ. Particulate matter is the tiny microscopic particles – soot and dust – that when breathed can get trapped in the lungs.

The installation of the devices is good news for schoolchildren riding the bus and those who wait near them as they idle, adds Stacey Adams, environmental planning consultant with the Department of Environmental Quality’s Office of Planning and Public Affairs.

“Not only does the outside air receive the benefit of reduced pollution, but the air children breathe inside the bus cabin will be cleaner as well,” she said.

Children are more at risk to the particulate pollution that spouts out of diesel-powered buses because their lungs are not as fully developed as adults.

For much of this past year, DAQ has been working with the state Office of Education, the Salt Lake County Mayor's Office, Utah Clean Cities, Utah Department of Transportation, Wasatch Front Regional Council, Mountainland Association of Governments, Utah Moms for Clean Air, Utah Clean Cities, Wasatch Clean Air Coalition and Utah County, to secure funding. The Environmental Protection Agency also supplied \$400,000 that will be supplanted with DAQ's \$96,000 and \$100,000 appropriation from the 2008 Legislature.

Another \$1.5 million will likely come from the Wasatch Front Regional Council and Mountainland Association of Governments, pending final approval, Carlile said. The rest of the money would come from non-competitive EPA grants, he added.

Installation of the pollution control devices will likely begin next year.

Approximately half of Utah's school districts are participating and DAQ is encouraging those who haven't signed on yet to contact them for more information or to express their interest in the project. Mat Carlile is the project manager and can be reached at 801-536-4136 or mcarlile@utah.gov.

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## **DEQ Survey Shows High Trust, Low Exposure Reaching Out to "Put a Face to DEQ"**

Taking a cue from a recent survey, the Utah Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) is reaching out to local leaders now more than ever in an attempt to highlight issues and services.

At the Utah League of Cities and Towns' fall conference in September, DEQ is presenting three sessions on air, land and water to provide an opportunity to share information about the environmental issues facing Utah.

"To be able to reach out and communicate with local officials is really important," said Rick Sprott, executive director of DEQ. "DEQ is always striving to improve its coordination with local officials and stakeholders."

The latest outreach effort is the brainchild of a DEQ Leadership Group, a handpicked group of employees who participated in a two-year program that prepares them for leadership roles.

"The 2007 Legislative Session, in which lawmakers weren't entirely clear on DEQ's programs, prompted us to come up with the idea of the need to do a better job of putting a face to DEQ," said Karin Tatum, an engineer with the Division of Drinking Water and member of the Leadership Group.

The group enlisted the help of the Utah League of Cities and Towns, with the assistance of Bill Damery, a Water Quality scientist who works closely with the League, to survey at least one representative from each of Utah's 243 cities and towns. A total of 2,506 surveys were sent to municipal, county, and special service district employees, to find out just how much they know about DEQ and whether their interactions with the agency have been positive.

"The survey was an attempt to determine general awareness of DEQ issues, programs and customer service," said Morgan Atkinson, scientist with the Division of Environmental Response and Remediation and member of the Leadership Group.

Of those who responded 322 – or 13 percent – indicated a high level of trust and confidence in DEQ, but over two-thirds of the respondents have had little interaction with the agency.

“In general, the survey showed that Utahns seem to take environmental quality for granted,” said Jeff Studenka, a scientist with the Division of Water Quality and member of the Leadership Group. “Please keep trying to educate us,” was one of the many comments received from the survey.”

Survey takers said their top issues are drinking water, wastewater disposal, air quality and energy efficiency. Even so, many were unfamiliar with DEQ’s programs.

“After the survey, we recognized the need to be proactive versus reactive,” Studenka said. “In looking ahead we hope to continue our partnership with the Utah League of Cities and Towns and the Utah Association of Counties to have a consistent presence and quality customer service.”

The League’s fall conference is just a start. For more information on the conference, visit [www.ulct.org](http://www.ulct.org).

“I’m encouraged that the survey showed us at the high end of the spectrum when it came to those who have had an interaction with us,” noted Sprott. “And, it’s through these kinds of outreach efforts that will help expose what we do with those unfamiliar with us.”

Walt Baker, director of Water Quality who mentored the group through its project, praised the efforts. “These are our future leaders. I’m delighted to have worked with all of them.”

The other members of this group include Kevin Hart of the Air Monitoring Center and Dale Jorgensen, budget officer for DEQ.

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## **Fall Events Highlight Green Energy**

A celebration to mark the opening of the state’s first commercial wind farm at the mouth of Spanish Fork canyon will kick off a series of events throughout September that focus on green energy.

On September 5-6, Spanish Fork will take center stage for kite flying, music and food that make up the “Spanish Fork Sky Spectacular, Utah’s first ever Wind Power Celebration.” The festival features world-class kite flying teams and a ‘green expo’ held on a plateau of the Spanish Fork Gun Club adjacent to Strawberry Reservoir.

“There will be lots of informational booths set up, from companies proposing renewable energy to agencies promoting environmental education,” said Elaine Hansen, special events coordinator for Spanish Fork. “You can ride a Segway there, talk to Tree Utah, visit Central Utah Water Conservancy District, the Department of Environmental Quality while listening to great music and eating food.”

At 11 a.m. Saturday, September 6, a ‘Welcome the Windmill Celebration’ will begin with the Spanish Fork Royalty launching nine balloons that celebrate the opening of the 9-turbine, 19-megawatt facility developed by Utah-based Wasatch Wind that is now fully energized.

Spanish Fork Mayor Joe Thomas will declare September 6 “Wind Power Day,” Hansen said. “There will be a kite making workshop for children,” she added. “There are a lot of fun things happening.”

For more information, visit [www.spanishfork.org](http://www.spanishfork.org).

Other events in September, include:

**September 6: Jordan Valley Water Conservancy District's "Utah Green Festival."**

Jordan Valley Water Conservancy District, located at 8215 South 1300 West in West Jordan, features a Conservation Garden Park that showcases beautiful, waterwise landscapes ideally suited for northern Utah.

The District's Green Festival focuses on all aspects of conservation, including water, air quality, and energy efficiency.

For more information, visit: [www.jvwcd.org](http://www.jvwcd.org).

**September 11-13: 19th Annual Utah Environmental Education Conference**

Located at the Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge, the conference is aimed at providing statewide leadership to educators that expand the scope, quality and effectiveness of environmental education.

The conference, sponsored by the Utah Society for Environmental Education, includes professional development opportunities for those who work with children K-12.

For more information, visit: [www.usee.org](http://www.usee.org).

**Utah Solar Tour – September 13 in northern Utah – September 27 in southern Utah**

The 2008 Utah Solar Tour is a unique opportunity to see, up close and personal, leading edge solar and renewable energy applications in homes and businesses throughout Utah.

It is a self-guided tour so you can pick your favorite from the 30 tour sites available, ask questions of experts and join presentations on the latest trends in energy efficiency.

For more information, visit: [www.utsolar.org](http://www.utsolar.org).

**September 26-27: Go Green Festival**

The first annual "Go Green Festival," located at Vernon Worthen Park, 300 South 400 East in St. George, is intended to increase awareness and encourage change by helping to educate families, businesses and communities to do just a little more to keep our planet green and southern Utah beautiful.

For more information, visit: [www.sgcity.org/parks/communityparks/worthen](http://www.sgcity.org/parks/communityparks/worthen).

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## Rocky Mountain Power Honors DEQ for Participation in Blue Sky Renewable Energy

Over a year's time, the Utah Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) will have purchased enough green power that equates to driving 3.8 million fewer miles.

In July, Rocky Mountain Power recognized DEQ for its participation in Blue Sky renewable energy program that allows companies and agencies to voluntarily purchase renewable energy in 100 kilowatt-hour increments, or blocks, which cost \$1.95 per block, per month in addition to their regular electricity bill. Businesses can receive a discount for bulk purchases through the Blue Sky program.



*Greg Noyes (Rocky Mountain Power) & Rick Spratt (Director, Utah DEQ)*

“DEQ’s monthly purchase of 1,480 100-kilowatt-hour blocks will help reduce our dependence on energy generated by fossil fuels,” said Rocky Mountain Power’s Greg Noyes. “Over a year’s time, DEQ’s visionary-level Blue Sky purchase will avoid carbon dioxide emissions by 1,776 tons, providing environmental benefits equivalent to driving a car 3.8 million less miles.”

DEQ began purchasing Blue Sky renewable energy earlier this year as part of an initiative developed by a group of employees known as the “Green Team.”

The Green Team, launched days before Earth Day 2007, focused on stepping up DEQ’s recycling, energy efficiency and air quality efforts in order to reduce its ecological footprint and set an example for other state agencies to follow.

“We wanted to put into action the benefits of clean renewable energy,” said Rick Spratt, executive director of DEQ. “This is a great program and is one of the ways Utahns can help met the Governor’s goal of 20 percent increase in energy efficiency by 2015.”

More than 27,000 Rocky Mountain Power customers in Utah, Wyoming and Idaho currently buy Blue Sky renewable energy, said Jeff Hymas of Rocky Mountain Power.

“Rocky Mountain Power’s Blue Sky program provides customers a simple and convenient way to support renewable energy from newly developed facilities in the western United States and to help increase the demand for renewable energy resources,” Hymas said.

Last year, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Energy named Blue Sky the Green Power Program of the Year.

For more information about Blue Sky, or to sign up, visit: [www.rockymountainpower.net/bluesky](http://www.rockymountainpower.net/bluesky).