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Division of Air Quality

Apply now to convert diesel delivery trucks to natural gas

Salt Lake City, Utah – Diesel delivery truck fleet operators may have something to smile about as a result of a new grant program initiated by the Utah Division of Air Quality (UDAQ). UDAQ has received just over \$350,000 to work with local businesses to convert their existing diesel engines to natural gas.

The grant program, being announced in conjunction with statewide promotions touting November as Alternative Fuels Month, is currently taking applications.

Alternative fuels are one solution proposed by Governor Gary Herbert to reduce dependence on foreign oil and improve air quality in Utah. Conversion of the 10 delivery trucks to domestically produced natural gas will reduce the need for foreign petroleum by 279,000 gallons per year.

Engines that operate on natural gas are estimated to significantly reduce the criteria pollutants of particulate matter, nitrogen oxide and hydrocarbons. Particulate matter is the major pollutant found in Utah's wintertime inversions and is of specific concern to state regulators. The new natural gas engines are expected to reduce it by 95 percent. Other estimates include a 50 percent reduction in both nitrogen oxide and hydrocarbons.

In addition to improving air quality for Utahns, truck operators are expected to see cost benefits as a result of the low cost of natural gas fuel itself. Natural gas is averaging about \$1.52 a gallon right now. Compare that with the current cost of diesel averaging about \$3.34 per gallon and the savings add up quickly.

Natural gas conversions were at an all time high during the summer of 2008 when the price of Utah gasoline reached over \$3.50 per gallon. At the time, natural gas was only \$0.91 per gallon. As a result, hundreds of Utah drivers converted their gasoline vehicles to use natural gas. In 2008, 3.2 million gallon equivalents of natural gas were used as transportation fuel in Utah.

Applications for the delivery truck conversions are being accepted until January 14, 2011. Information about the natural gas conversion grant can be found at www.cleandiesel.utah.gov.

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