



United States
Environmental Protection
Agency

Region 5
77 West Jackson Blvd.
Chicago, Illinois 60604

Illinois, Indiana,
Michigan, Minnesota,
Ohio, Wisconsin

Environmental NEWS RELEASE



CONTACT: William Omohundro, 312-353-8254, omohundro.william@epa.gov

F O R I M M E D I A T E R E L E A S E

No. 09-OPA172

EPA MIDWEST CLEAN DIESEL INITIATIVE LEADERSHIP GROUP PRESENTS AWARDS FOR DIESEL EMISSION REDUCTIONS

(Chicago – Sept. 17, 2009) — U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 5’s Midwest Clean Diesel Initiative Leadership Group today recognized people and organizations that have acted to reduce diesel emissions. The awards were presented at a ceremony in Chicago.

Winners are: Minnesota Environmental Initiative, Wisconsin Department of Commerce and Darwin Burkhart of Illinois Environmental Protection Agency.

“These award winners have all done a great job and are role models to their peers,” said Region 5 Midwest Clean Diesel Initiative Coordinator Steve Marquardt. “Each honoree has forged unique and effective partnerships for reducing diesel emissions in the Midwest.”

Minnesota Environmental Initiative is a non-profit organization with a unique public-private partnership in a state that meets the current EPA national ambient air quality standards. MEI’s Project Green Fleet, an initiative the group started in 2005, has a goal to retrofit all eligible school buses across Minnesota (they estimate 4,000 buses). By the end of 2008, Project Green Fleet had installed over 1,200 diesel oxidation catalysts and/or closed crankcase filtration systems on buses across the state, and will be more than halfway to its goal by the end of this year. These actions have reduced diesel emissions exposure to approximately 30,000 Minnesota schoolchildren.

Wisconsin Department of Commerce administers the Wisconsin Idle Reduction Grant Program which provides 50 percent of the cost of an idle reduction technology to Wisconsin-based fleets. The grant program, founded by the Wisconsin legislature, has funded more than 1,100 idle reduction devices in 339 grant awards, affecting fleets across the state. The program has been so successful that the state legislature has reauthorized it through 2015.

The MCDI High Horsepower Award for individual excellence was presented to Darwin Burkhart for his dedication, leadership and drive in administering clean diesel/clean air programs for Illinois EPA. Burkhart manages several clean air programs, including the Illinois Clean Bus Program, the Illinois Green Fleets Program, the Illinois Alternative Fuel Rebate Program and the Illinois Clean Diesel Initiative. Through these programs, he has administered over \$6 million to fund projects across the state that address emissions from utility trucks, over-the-road trucks, delivery trucks, transit buses, school buses, locomotives, marine engines, mining equipment and other diesel-powered emission sources. By creating and fostering partnerships with governments, non-profits, schools and industry organizations, Burkhart has forged effective and long-lasting diesel emission reductions that benefit the people of Illinois.

The MCDI Leadership Group consists of 33 public sector, non-profit and private industry organizations that share the goal of cutting emissions from 1 million diesel engines in the Region 5 states by 2010. The group is co-chaired by Cummins Inc., Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, American Lung Association-Upper Midwest and EPA Region 5.

The Midwest Clean Diesel Initiative was created to reduce emissions from older, existing diesel engines not covered by EPA's stringent standards for cleaner fuels and new, cleaner engines. MCDI estimates that more than 3 million diesel engines in the Midwest would benefit from use of diesel retrofit technologies, repowers, replacement, cleaner fuels, idle-reduction, and other clean diesel strategies. Already, the public-private partnership has affected 761,000 engines.

Diesel emissions contain large amounts of nitrogen oxides and fine particles (soot). Nitrogen oxides are precursors of ozone (smog), which is a lung irritant, and fine particles can aggravate respiratory and heart diseases.

More information on the Midwest Clean Diesel Initiative and the MCDI Leadership Group is at <http://www.epa.gov/midwestcleandiesel/>.

#