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Improving Our Air, Improving Company Profits:
New American Lung Association Campaign Can Save Businesses Money

(Williston, January 25, 2010) - The American Lung Association in Vermont today launched a campaign that will raise awareness of the health effects and economic impact of unnecessary diesel idling.

"Vermont Idle-Free Fleets," as the campaign has been named, provides business fleet operators with a toolkit that explains the myths and realities associated with truck idling, the health effects of diesel exhaust, the cost savings achieved by an idling reduction policy, and sample model policies.

The campaign, funded by a grant from the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), also offers PowerPoint presentations and technical support for businesses in Chittenden County and Rutland County. Rutland County has the highest rate of emergency room visits due to asthma.

Breathing diesel exhaust can cause coughing, burning eyes, chest constriction and difficulty breathing. "Studies have found that truck drivers and others who inhaled diesel exhaust on the job were much more likely to die from lung cancer, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and heart disease," said Rebecca Ryan, director of health promotion and public policy for the Lung Association.

According to Tom Moye, mobile sources section manager for the DEC, motor vehicles are the largest source of toxic and carcinogenic pollutants in Vermont. "Limiting engine idling time whenever practical can make a significant impact on reducing harmful diesel exhaust fumes. Turning engines off when trucks are not in use can save money on fuel and in reduced engine wear."

Reducing diesel idling is a cost saver for Green Mountain Coffee Roasters. Don Ostler, Delivery Operations Manager, said the company saves over \$20,000 per year just by avoiding unnecessary idling. "We adopted a policy in 2005 to reduce idling to 20 percent of runtime, and we have since far exceeded that goal. Our fleet now idles only three percent of runtime and avoids consuming nearly 7,000 gallons of fuel per year. "

Wayne Michaud, director of the nonprofit organization Idle-Free VT Inc. and coordinator of the Vermont Idle-Free Fleets campaign, notes, "United Parcel Service (UPS) drivers turn off their engines even if out of the vehicle for a few seconds. This policy saves the company \$12 million per year. Plain and simple, idling gets zero miles to the gallon."

According to the Clean Air Task Force, Vermont workers exposed to diesel exhaust this year will lose over 1200 work days. Respiratory problems caused by diesel exhaust will cost the state \$78 million in health care costs.

Eliminating unnecessary diesel idling is a win for Vermont businesses, public health and the environment. For more information about the campaign, contact Wayne Michaud at idlefreefleetsvt@lungne.org or call the American Lung Association in Williston at 800-LUNG-USA, Ext. 6860. For more information about the American Lung Association, visit www.lungne.org