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White Bear Lake Area Schools' vehicles Go Green

Voluntary efforts result in cleaner air and healthier kids

White Bear Lake, Minn. – School buses and heavy-duty vehicles serving the White Bear Lake Area School District 624 are now running cleaner and greener thanks to the voluntary efforts of the school district. ISD 624 recently partnered with **Project Green Fleet**, a collaboration of businesses, government agencies and nonprofit organizations dedicated to improving Minnesota's air quality by reducing diesel emissions.

Buses and heavy-duty vehicles are made "green" by the installation of federally approved catalyst mufflers that can reduce engine emissions and heaters that reduce idling. Ten school buses, one dump truck and one water truck in the White Bear Lake Area School District fleet have been retrofitted with catalyst mufflers and five have had idle-reducing heaters installed, with a combined worth of more than \$23,000.

There has been no cost to White Bear Lake Area Schools for the pollution control equipment, thanks to the support of Project Green Fleet's funders. ISD 624's participation has been made possible by a grant from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Project Green Fleet has also received support from project funders such as Flint Hills Resources, Andersen Corporation and Blue Cross Blue Shield Foundation of Minnesota. Project Green Fleet worked with

Donaldson Company Inc., a Minnesota-based manufacturer of clean diesel technologies, to purchase the mufflers and Telin Transportation in Becker, Minn., to complete the installations. Heaters were purchased from and installed by Hogle Bus & Truck in Monticello, Minnesota.

Participation in Project Green Fleet is entirely voluntary. Air quality in Minnesota currently meets federal standards administered by the U.S Environmental Protection Agency. As a result, there is no mandate in Minnesota to retrofit diesel engines to make them run cleaner.

Cleaner running buses serving White Bear Lake Area School District are part of a larger statewide effort by Project Green Fleet. To date, approximately 2,300 buses have been retrofitted around the state of Minnesota. Those retrofits have reduced emissions exposure for thousands of school children.

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Project Green Fleet began in 2005 when the Minnesota Environmental Initiative (MEI) partnered with the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce, the Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy, and numerous businesses, state government agencies, and nonprofits to create the project. MEI, a nonprofit that builds partnerships to develop collaborative solutions to Minnesota's environmental problems, continues to coordinate Project Green Fleet.

Project Green Fleet has almost reached its goal to retrofit every eligible bus in Minnesota. The organization is in its final stage of retrofits. Funding to install retrofit equipment will expire soon. Those who are interested in participating in the program while funding is still in place may call Eric David at 612-334-3388 x108, email at edavid@mn-ei.org, or visit www.projectgreenfleet.org for additional information.

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