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Feb. 20, 2006

For immediate release

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\$7.5 Million for Clean School Bus Projects Awarded

Tucson Unified School District stands right in line with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's goal of protecting the environment.

Today, U.S. EPA Administrator Stephen Johnson awarded TUSD with a \$500,000 Clean School Bus USA grant awards to be used toward the purchase of over 60 new dedicated compressed natural gas (CNG) buses. The district was awarded the grant in part because of its 12 years of experience with CNG buses, strong public-private partnerships and its commitment to idle reduction in its fleet.

"This grant is significant in helping the overall community reduce vehicle emissions with the district's ability now to purchase these buses," said Colleen Crowninshield, manager of Pima Association of Governments' Clean Cities Program. "The reduction of emissions will further improve the environment and increase the region's quality of life."

Johnson, who presented the award at El Presidio Park in downtown Tucson, also announced other national grant recipients. The 37 grants total \$7.5 million and leverage an additional \$13 million in matching funds and in-kind services. Nationally, more than 500 tons of diesel particulate matter emissions will be reduced from 4,000 school buses.

The EPA's Clean School Bus USA initiative is aiming to reduce children's exposure to diesel exhaust across the United States by: (1) encouraging policies and practices to eliminate unnecessary school bus idling; (2) installing effective emission control systems on newer buses; and (3) replacing the oldest buses in the fleet with new ones which are up to 60 times cleaner. Replacement options may include buses powered by clean diesel or compressed natural gas.

"Our goal is that by 2010, every school bus in America will be a 'clean bus,' emitting less pollution," Johnson said. "Cleaner buses and cleaner air mean fewer respiratory

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ailments, fewer school days lost to illness and a brighter, healthier future for all our kids.”

The EPA received 172 applications for projects, a 50 percent increase since the last clean school bus grant competition in 2003.

More information about Clean School Bus USA and the list of grantees is at:

<http://www.epa.gov/cleanschoolbus>.

Pima Association of Governments is an association of local, state and tribal governments with a mission to build consensus among its members and the public on regional planning for transportation, air quality and water quality. PAG's staff gather and analyze data, provide accurate information, and coordinate an open and cooperative planning process to promote good decision-making for the region. Please visit www.pagnet.org for more information.