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Parma Heights ambulances to be fitted with emission control devices-first in the state

City teams with environmental group to protect public health

Parma Heights, OH – The Ohio Environmental Council today awarded nearly \$5,000 to the city of Parma Heights to help fund the clean up of two city ambulances with top of the line emission control devices.

The pollution controls are expected to reduce harmful tailpipe pollution by 40% and eliminate 100% of in-cabin emissions. The two vehicles are the first known ambulances in Ohio to be retrofitted with state-of-the-art emissions controls.

“Diesel exhaust is loaded with harmful toxins,” said David R. Celebrezze, Director of Air & Water Special Projects for the Ohio Environmental Council. “The last place a sick or injured person would want to be exposed to these smelly emissions is in an ambulance on the way to the hospital. The OEC is proud to support Parma Heights for its visionary efforts to protect its citizens’ health. This commitment to public health and safety by Parma Heights is a model for all Ohio communities that operate ambulances.”

A resident of Parma Heights—Toni Temple—took action after being exposed to diesel exhaust from an ambulance when she was taken to the hospital last year. Toni contacted the city of Parma Heights and urged it to partner with the Ohio Environmental Council on diesel engine clean up.

“My sensitization to diesel exhaust emissions caused a life-threatening situation during ambulance transport,” said Toni Temple, President of the Ohio Network for the Chemically Injured (www.ohionetwork.org). “The OEC’s tireless efforts to educate my city about the availability of grant funding led to the first ambulance retrofits in Ohio. It is critical to acknowledge that ambulance diesel emissions need to be controlled so they do not further aggravate the health condition of people already in distress.”

“The OEC commends Toni Temple for getting involved in her community and making a difference. If not for her, others could be subjected to harmful diesel fumes,” stated Celebrezze.

Parma Heights not only is retrofitting its two ambulances, but also will retrofit nine service department vehicles with diesel particulate filters and other pollution control technologies.

“Diesel pollution is a real problem, but, with the OEC’s support we will reduce emissions and better protect public health. In fact, the OEC helped us obtain a grant which will retrofit the bulk of our service department diesel fleet. This will positively improve the quality of life for the residents of our

community by reducing diesel emissions ” said Joseph Sebes, Director of Human Services for Parma Heights.

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, diesel exhaust contains more than 40 toxins, including known and probable carcinogens such as benzene and formaldehyde. It also contains particulate matter, particles that are only 1/30th the width of a human hair. Particle pollution is so small that, according to medical scientists, it can be inhaled deeply into a person’s lungs and can penetrate the bloodstream.

According to the EPA, diesel exhaust can:

- Trigger asthma attacks and cause lung damage, heart disease, cancer, and early death.
- Cause acid rain, ozone smog, haze, and global climate change.
- Drive up costs for business from lost work days caused by air pollution-related illness and by forcing counties in non-attainment areas to offset increases in emissions.

According to the EPA, 29% of all diesel particle pollution comes from heavy duty trucks.

Parma Heights is taking action at the local level to address harmful diesel pollution. The state of Ohio can do its part by:

- Funding the successful Ohio Diesel Emission Reduction Grant program to at least \$20 million a year through sustainable funding sources.
- Adopting a no-idling policy for state government vehicles.
- Adopting a state-wide no-idling policy for all vehicles.
- Requiring all public works projects sized \$2 million and larger to use diesel equipment that reduces emissions by at least 85%.

The OEC encourages cities around the state to reduce their diesel footprint by:

- Adopting city-wide no-idling ordinances.
- Requiring all public works contracts to have emission reduction standards.
- Developing a comprehensive diesel clean-up plan for city vehicle fleets.

The Parma Heights vehicles are being retrofitted with two types of pollution controls:

The diesel oxidation catalyst (DOC) is a device that uses a chemical process to break down pollutants in the exhaust stream into less harmful components. The DOC has a porous ceramic honeycomb-like structure that is coated with a material that catalyzes a chemical reaction to reduce pollution.

A closed crankcase ventilation system (CCVS) reroutes the blow-by tube (an exhaust pipe that vents engine exhaust to the road at the front of the vehicle) so that engine exhaust travels back through the engine and exits through the tailpipe. The CCVS contains a disposable filter that captures oil vapors so that the engine turbocharger is not fouled by recycling the exhaust back through the engine. The CCVS eliminates in-cabin accumulation of diesel emissions that leak through the dash and maximizes the effectiveness of tailpipe retrofit devices.

Funding for the OEC grant is from a consent decree between the United States, State of Ohio, and Premcor, Lima Refinery in which Premcor agreed to give funding to the Ohio Environmental Council for the installation of diesel retrofit technologies to reduce particle pollution and ozone precursors from municipal trucks and/or buses. This consent decree is a result of the US EPA and Ohio EPA identifying violations of certain provisions of the Clean Air Act, its implementing regulations, and the

relevant provisions of the Ohio State Implementation Plan. Part of the settlement is this Supplemental Environmental Project (SEP).

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The mission of the Ohio Environmental Council (OEC) is to secure healthy air, land, and water for all who call Ohio home. The OEC is Ohio's leading advocate for fresh air, clean water, and sustainable land use. The OEC has a 40-year history of innovation, pragmatism, and success. Using legislative initiatives, legal action, scientific principles, and statewide partnerships, the OEC secures a healthier environment for Ohio's families and communities. For more information, visit www.theOEC.org.