

IdleAire Enters Madera

Residents of Madera may not have noticed, but on July 22, the air became cleaner. 62 florescent yellow tubes, located at the Pilot fueling station on Road 18 ½, now mark the Highway 99 landscape with an innovative new technology known as IdleAire. With the promise of improving the well-being of resting truckers while simultaneously decreasing the inefficiency of idling trucks, this technology will help alleviate exhaust and noise problems plaguing today's truck stops.

From afar, the 62 yellow tubes are an interesting sight; however, closer inspection reveals a magnificent solution to unnecessary engine idling. Each tube, known as a service module, connects to the cab of a truck via a window adapter—a one time \$10 cost—to provide heating and cooling along with features such as cable television; telephone and internet service; and 110V electric outlets. The cost for this basic service is \$1.25 per hour, which is comparable to the cost of idling a diesel truck for the same period of time. Premium channels; pay-per-view movies; high-speed broadband and online trucker certification training can also be purchased at an additional cost. Drivers pay directly for the service using a card-swipe machine located on the IdleAire unit, which accepts fleet, credit, or IdleAire cards.

The benefit of having such features in the cab allows truckers to turn off their diesel engines, which not only saves fuel, but minimizes the wear-and-tear of the engine; and reduces engine noise and emissions. All IdleAire stalls are staffed 24 hours per day/ 7 days per week to install and remove the equipment and also to teach drivers about the new technology. Danny Gaitan, an IdleAire employee who assists drivers with the installation and removal of the IdleAire unit, raves about the benefits of truckers turning off their engines. “It’s not only quieter now, but there is much less diesel exhaust in the air as well. As far as the drivers go, they absolutely love it.”

Mark White, a truck driver from San Diego, started using IdleAire in July and now stops at IdleAire equipped stations whenever possible. “IdleAire is real easy to use and comes with a lot of great services. Plus, not having to idle the truck saves fuel.” Mr. White is further impressed by how much better the IdleAire unit cools his cab compared to his truck's air conditioning unit.

Driven by the air quality dilemma that faces the Valley, the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District worked closely with the Pilot fueling station, the IdleAire Corporation and the Madera County Board of Supervisors to deliver this promising new technology to truckers along Highway 99 and Madera residents. With additional IdleAire sites planned for Santa Nella, Los Banos, Bakersfield, and Fresno, the Air Districts estimates a reduction of 2,993 tons of harmful Nitrogen Oxides (NOx) and 7 ½ tons of fine particulate matter (PM10) over five years.

According to Richard Jewell, Supervising Manager of the IdleAire station in Madera, 50% of all drivers are familiar with the new technology. Truckers who have used IdleAire in the past love it and those who choose to learn about the service soon become

believers. The greatest hurdle, explains Mr. Jewell, is getting truck drivers to try out the system. “Truck drivers have a fear of the unknown and are hesitant to try something new. Most fear that IdleAire is somehow trying to scam them out of money.” In fact, nothing can be further from the truth. IdleAire provides truckers with cheap access to all the amenities that can be found in a hotel room, without ever having to leave their cab. The result is a unique union of driver comfort and tangible air quality improvements.

For additional pictures and the internet link to the IdleAire corporation, please visit www.maderactc.org