



Decentralized Vehicle Emissions Inspection and Maintenance Program Progress Report to the General Assembly and the Governor

The vehicle emissions inspection and maintenance program is a federally required control strategy in the St. Louis ozone nonattainment area. The I/M program is designed to reduce ground-level ozone-forming emissions from passenger vehicles and trucks. Ground-level ozone is a strong oxidizing chemical that when breathed affects the lung function of everyone, especially the young, the elderly and those with respiratory illnesses such as asthma, emphysema, and bronchitis.

Pursuant to 643.303.4, RSMo, the Department of Natural Resources is issuing a progress report on the status of the implementation of the decentralized vehicle emissions inspection and maintenance program. The following tasks have been completed as of January 1, 2007:

Greater St. Louis Area Vehicle Repair Industry Survey

In June 2006, the department released a survey to all licensed safety inspection stations in the St. Louis ozone nonattainment area. This survey was used to inform the Greater St. Louis Area vehicle repair industry that legislation had passed that would be changing the design of the vehicle emissions I/M program after September 1, 2007. The survey was also used to gather information from the St. Louis repair industry about the level of interest in their participation in a decentralized emissions I/M program.

Of approximately 1,150 surveys mailed, the department received 270 responses, a 23 percent response rate. 82 percent of the respondents indicated that they want to be licensed to perform emissions inspections, and 13 percent of the respondents indicated that they might be interested in being licensed to perform emissions inspections. An open letter to the Greater St. Louis Area vehicle repair industry summarizing the survey results and the upcoming changes was published on the department's I/M Redesign web site in October 2006.

Draft Decentralized Emissions I/M Rule

In November 2006, the department released for comment via the internet an initial draft of the new rule that will be used to implement the decentralized emissions I/M program. The comment period began on November 8, 2006, and will close on January 9, 2007. All comments and responses to comments are posted with the rule.

The Missouri Air Conservation Commission will hold a formal public hearing once the final draft proposed rule is filed with the Secretary of State. This will give citizens and the Greater St. Louis Area vehicle repair industry another opportunity to comment on the rule proposal before it becomes effective.

Gateway Vehicle Inspection Program Request for Proposal

Throughout the summer and fall of 2006, the department and the Missouri State Highway Patrol met to work out the details of a combined, decentralized emissions and safety I/M program. The decentralized program will be called the Gateway Vehicle Inspection Program. As a result of these interagency meetings, the department drafted a Request for Proposal (RFP) document.

On December 14, 2006, the Office of Administration's Division of Purchasing and Materials Management released the RFP for the Gateway Vehicle Inspection Program. This RFP describes the emissions and safety inspection program equipment (hardware and software) and program management services that the department and the Missouri State Highway Patrol are seeking. A pre-proposal conference with potential bidders is scheduled for 9:00 AM, Thursday, January 4, 2007, in Room 492 of the Harry S Truman State Office Building.

I/M Redesign Web Site

The department is maintaining a web site that contains links to all of the information described above. This web site allows anyone who is interested in the implementation of the Gateway Vehicle Inspection Program to receive up-to-date information. The web site address is:

<http://www.dnr.mo.gov/env/apcp/gcap/IMredesign.htm>.

Estimate of the Number of Licensed Emissions Inspection Stations

Presently, there are approximately 1,100 licensed safety inspection stations in the St. Louis ozone nonattainment area, including the counties of St. Charles, St. Louis, Jefferson, and Franklin, along with the City of St. Louis.

Missouri Recognized Repair Technicians (MRRTs) are the repair technicians whose labor costs may be applied towards an emissions waiver. These MRRTs have passed three exams from the National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence and have taken a minimum of four hours of continuing education regarding vehicle emissions diagnosis and repairs in the last calendar year. Presently, there are nearly 300 small businesses that employ almost 500 MRRTs in the St. Louis ozone nonattainment area, excluding Franklin County.

The department assumes that the majority of the small businesses who will be licensed to perform emissions inspections by the start of the Gateway Vehicle Inspection Program will be currently licensed safety inspection stations that also employ one or more MRRTs. If this assumption is accurate, then the number of licensed emissions inspection stations will be approximately 300 by September 1, 2007.

The department expects that after the Gateway Vehicle Inspection Program begins, the number of small businesses who will be licensed to perform emissions inspections will increase. There is no way to accurately predict how many small businesses will ultimately be licensed to perform emissions inspections. Each small business will have to choose to participate based upon financial factors such as the cost of the inspection equipment and the amount of revenue from each inspection that are not quantifiable by the department at this time. However, the estimated maximum number of licensed emissions inspection stations would be 1,100, the same as the current number of licensed safety inspection stations in the St. Louis ozone nonattainment area.