

## **How to get a free tuneup, clean air, too**

**By Roger Teschner**

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As director of the Advanced Transportation Technology and Energy Initiative (ATTEi) at Fresno City College, I have worked with Valley Clean Air Now (Valley CAN), a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving air quality in the San Joaquin Valley, to implement their Tune In and Tune Up program throughout the Valley since 2005. The Tune In and Tune Up program provides free emissions testing and \$500 repair vouchers to any participant whose vehicle fails the emissions test.

This highly successful program is dedicated to making significant improvements in the Valley air pollution problem by reducing the pollution from older vehicles.

A major component of this emissions program is education.

As the liaison to the 14 community college campuses in the region, I have developed relationships with local community colleges that offer student automotive programs. At each event, we set up a series of canopies labeled diagnostics.

After the participants get their vehicles' emissions tested, they are instructed to drive to the canopies for free under-the-hood checks. The students, with supervision from their instructors, follow checklists of possible problems to locate on the vehicle. At any given time, there are more than 20 vehicles in diagnostics with more than 25 students getting firsthand experience with customers and their vehicles.

A Tune In and Tune Up event often brings in more than 300 vehicles for emissions testing and more than 200 vehicles for diagnostic testing. This live preparation for their future in the automotive industry is invaluable, as this real-life experience cannot be taught in a classroom.

For 20 years, I worked for General Motors doing program research, development and delivery in Detroit and in various training center management positions. Throughout this time, I also worked with various colleges to create and maintain a partnership to recruit, educate and graduate entry-level technicians.

During my tenure, I never saw a program like Tune In and Tune Up that targeted the source of air pollution while educating our future automotive employees on the importance of air quality and providing them hands-on experience with future customers and vehicle-related problems.

In addition to hosting the Tune In and Tune Up event, Valley CAN, through ATTEi, has provided each participating college with an \$8,000 grant to purchase emissions-related equipment for their automotive programs. Most state-funded colleges are on tight budgets, and this type of donation is invaluable as a tool for current and future students.

The result is that each participating college can purchase the advanced technology equipment it needs, plus acquire hands-on diagnostic experience for its students.

The importance of this event to our community is improved transportation efficiency, awareness of alternative energy choices and solutions to immediate vehicle air-pollution issues validated by enthusiastic local community participation.

This emissions-reduction program has been held at seven of the 14 campuses in the Valley. The next campus to participate will be Reedley College.

The students will participate in Tune In and Tune Up early in 2008.

This Tune In and Tune Up will be different than most, as it will be partially funded through a grant from the California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley, and it will outreach to environmental justice communities including the neighboring city of Parlier. A similar event was held at Arvin High School last summer, with the high school automotive students doing the vehicle diagnostics.

With the outpouring of support from past hosting community colleges that have partnered with Valley CAN, Reedley College is very excited to engage its automotive students in this learning experience.

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