

## *Oregon truck stop business aims to help truckers, save the planet*

The Associated Press

COBURG, Ore. — A truck stop business designed to spare the planet has opened near the Interstate 5 exit to Coburg. It sells fuel-saving and anti-pollution devices to long-haul semitrailer drivers.

The enterprise is the creation of Sharon Banks and her nonprofit agency Cascade Sierra Solutions.

Chief among the wares are auxiliary power units that allow truckers to keep themselves warm, or cool, without idling their rigs, an idea that made sense to a trucker who stopped at the showroom.

"I'm running a 480-horsepower engine to keep me warm," said Mike Swehla, a Sacramento-based trucker.

Banks said the trucks usually get only 5 miles per gallon of diesel, but a full retrofit of energy-saving goods ranging from \$10,000 to \$25,000 could save 25 percent on a trucker's fuel bill.

"If you're going to keep your truck for three, four or five years, you can get a good return on the investment," she said.

Among other items:

- Single tires: A tire with 17-inch tread can replace double 11-inch wheels on long-haul trucks converting an 18-wheeler to a 10-wheeler, and saving as much as 8 percent in fuel, Banks said.
- Radio-controlled tire pressure monitors so drivers can know instantly when their tires need more air -- running fully inflated tires saves fuel.
- A dashboard display that gives a continuous reading of fuel efficiency, allowing the driver to make adjustments in driving techniques to save fuel.

- Diesel air cleaners that reduce emissions by 90 percent -- and cost \$18,000. "You can literally put a white hanky over the tail pipe and it won't turn black," Banks said.

Among the impediments to cutting fuel use and pollution in big rigs is access, Bank said. Hence the showroom at the truck stop.

Then there's cost, which Banks helps to meet with \$5.6 million in loanable funds from the Oregon Department of Transportation and the Oregon Energy Department, which funds Banks' efforts.

In addition, the showcase is equipped to process U.S. Small Business Administration loans, and Banks said she is lobbying for tax credits and grants from Oregon, Washington and California.

The Coburg showroom features the trappings of a soda shop with black-and-white checkered floors, a lunch-counter-like table with spinning stools, and a menu of 40 different kinds of fuel-saving, anti-pollution technologies.

Banks said she's planning five more along the Interstate 5 corridor, in Seattle, Portland, Medford, Sacramento and Los Angeles.

A Sacramento site is next, she said. She hopes to open it in July, in partnership with the Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District.

"We heard her talk about it and get excited about it," Executive Director Larry Greene said. "She's the catalyst that brought a lot of people together to make this happen."

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