

-- NEWS RELEASE --

**Leon County Schools Awarded \$347,000 Grant from EPA
*Help to Create Green Jobs and Protect Leon's Environment***

Tallahassee, FL—Today, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced that Leon County Schools has been awarded a grant of \$347,000 to purchase eight (8) compressed natural gas (CNG) buses and replace six (6) further buses, among other activities.

“Educating our students about going green through direct example has been one of my top priorities as superintendent,” said Superintendent Jackie Pons. “Our schools have been focused on researching new technology and finding best practices that help alleviate energy costs and provide service learning opportunities to all of our students—I am excited to receive this grant that reinforces our focus.”

From the EPA:

In a move that stands to create jobs, boost local economies, reduce diesel emissions and protect human health and the environment for people of Leon County, Florida, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has awarded \$347,288 to the Leon County School Board to purchase new compressed natural gas school buses, repower existing school buses, and to develop and provide idle-reduction training in the County. This clean diesel project will create jobs while protecting Leon County's air quality.

“This grant is a great investment in environmental protection and will provide long-term economic benefits for Florida,” said Stan Meiburg, EPA Acting Administrator in Atlanta. “This funding will go a long way in helping to bolster the economy and protect public health and the environment by creating green jobs that improve air quality.”

The Leon County School Board will use the \$347,288 in Recovery Act funds to purchase eight (8) new compressed natural gas school buses, repower six (6) existing school buses with engines that meet EPA's 2010 diesel standards, use geospatial positioning software to streamline bus routing and roads utilization, provide idle-reduction training to county employees, and develop a model program and create training materials to be used by other diesel retrofit programs. The project is anticipated to reduce total life time emissions from these buses by 66.4 tons.

In addition to helping to create and retain jobs, this clean diesel project will reduce asthma attacks and other respiratory ailments, lost work days, and many other health impacts every year.

Leon County Schools plans to build a first of its kind Compressed Natural Gas filling station to be used in partnership with the entire Leon County community. This station will provide the community access to a cleaner burning fuel helping to not only create jobs, but also decrease combustion pollution county-wide. Additional grants have been applied for to assist in building this station.

###