



# NEWS RELEASE

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**IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Santa Ana College's Diesel Program Receives Early Holiday Present \*\* Truck donated by Hino & Tom's Truck Center of Santa Ana \*\***

SANTA ANA --- Santa came early today for the students and faculty at Santa Ana College (SAC) thanks to the generosity of two model corporate citizens - Hino Trucks and Tom's Truck Center of Santa Ana. Hino Trucks and Tom's Truck Center donated a late-model commercial diesel truck to the Automotive/Diesel program for student training purposes. Each year, more than 1,000 students will benefit from this new training tool. SAC's Automotive Technology/Diesel program, which is unique in Orange County, boasts a 100% job placement rate for students earning associate's degrees or professional certificates in Automotive Technology/Diesel.

"This donation not only supports the students enrolled in the Automotive Technology/Diesel program but it also will be used as part of the college's Career Academy Scholars Program, which provides a career/job training pathway for high school students attending High School Inc., an innovative collaboration involving the college, Santa Ana Unified School District, the Santa Ana Business Alliance and other strategic partners," explained Erlinda J. Martinez, Ed.D., college president. Students from High School, Inc. enroll in Saturday classes, earning both high school graduation credits and college units for course completion. The goal of this collaboration, according to President Martinez, is to provide the automotive industry with a qualified pipeline of well-trained students, skilled in repairing diesel engines and trucks.

Hino Trucks, a long-standing partner of the college's program, has donated another truck and other instructional materials to the Automotive Technology/Diesel program over the past decade. The company's commitment to developing and manufacturing "green" diesel vehicles complements the direction of SAC's program. According to Tom Hogue, SAC diesel instructor, diesel fuel is clean-burning and supports stringent emission standards. Given the

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environmental benefits of diesel fuel and given that 40-50% of the diesel mechanic workforce are poised for retirement by 2014, the job market is favorable for the technically-trained students graduating from SAC's program.

George Heidler, president of Tom's Truck Center, told the crowd today that "When people think about the availability of jobs, they sometimes forget about the old fashioned, technical jobs that are plentiful in this marketplace. With the training that students receive here at Santa Ana College, they will have viable careers." President Martinez reiterated the value of career technical education saying, "students who earn vocational education certificates experience a 50% increase in wages within the first three years upon graduating." Sumio Fukaya, president of Hino Trucks/USA, discussed the future of the automotive industry explaining, "Today's diesel technicians must be versatile to adapt to new technologies and our customer's evolving needs. There is no substitute for 'hands on' training which can only be obtained by working on the product. This truck donation will provide state-of-the-art technology to complement Santa Ana College's efforts to provide world-class future technicians for Hino, Hino dealers and the entire automotive industry."

Through the support of strategic partners like Hino and Tom's Truck Center, SAC's program remains a leading training program providing employers in the region with highly skilled automotive/diesel mechanics. Program graduates are qualified to repair and maintain a wide spectrum of heavy and medium sized diesel commercial vehicles from big rigs and ladder fire trucks to emergency vehicles, school buses, and smaller transportation trucks. The program, which began nearly 40 years ago, is also one of five in the state offering California Air Resources Board certifications.

The truck donation was formally accepted by President Martinez, Tony Ellis, president of the Santa Ana College Foundation Board of Directors, and Edward Hernandez, Jr., Ed.D., chancellor of the Rancho Santiago Community College District. The truck will be integrated into the curriculum for the spring semester, which begins on February 8, 2010.

**About the Rancho Santiago Community College District**

*The mission of the Rancho Santiago Community College District (RSCCD) is to respond to the educational needs of an ever-changing community and to provide programs and services that reflect academic excellence. Santa Ana College and Santiago Canyon College are public community colleges of RSCCD, which serve the residents of Anaheim Hills, East Garden Grove, Irvine, Orange, Santa Ana, Tustin and Villa Park. Both colleges provide education for academic transfer and careers, courses for personal and professional development, customized training for business and industry, and programs to train nurses, firefighters and law enforcement personnel.*

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