

Simulation-Based Driver Training for Maximum Fuel Efficiency and Safety: A Vital Step towards Greening America

Increasing the efficient use of energy is a cornerstone of the Obama Administration's plans for the greening of America. It is imperative that the United States use its fossil fuel resources wisely for environmental, economic and national security reasons. And while advances in technology will surely have a major impact on energy efficiency, it is still the human element that ultimately controls our energy destiny.

Simulation-Based Driver Training (SDT) teaches participants how to operate vehicles (buses, trucks, vans and automobiles) in a safe and fuel efficient manner. A variety of different scenarios can be programmed giving trainees access to direct experience and immediate quantitative feedback on their performance.

The **SDT Project** creates a state-wide effort to improve the driving skills of professional drivers employed by trucking firms, school districts (bus drivers), fleet operators and local governments. It will also establish outreach efforts to high schools and middle schools to increase awareness of both safe/efficient driving practices and careers in transportation. We believe that it is possible to increase fuel efficiency (and therefore decrease total fuel cost) by up to 15%, although average gains in the 5% to 7% range may be more typical.

SDT Project benefits include: 1) energy cost savings that will make trucking firms and large fleet operators more competitive, improve bottom-line performance, and therefore **save jobs**; 2) **easing the budget strain** on public entities during this period of tax revenue shortfalls; 3) decreasing **the carbon footprint**; 4) decreasing the need for oil imports; and 5) improving the safety of our roads and decreasing insurance costs.