

Device may revolutionize trucking industry

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Clarkson University has announced development of an experimental fuel-saving device that may help revolutionize the trucking industry.

Researchers say their device reduces the "drag" on tractor trailers, thereby increasing fuel efficiency by some 10 percent, as well as reducing costs and emissions.

"Traditional transport vehicles have a flat aft end that creates a large drag on the vehicle at highway speeds, which ultimately reduces gas mileage and increases costs and emissions," explained Ken Visser, associate professor of aeronautical and mechanical engineering. "We have designed extendable flat plates that can be mounted to the truck's rear doors to reduce drag."

The device, resembling a set of second doors that open into a box-like structure, has been studied in Clarkson's wind tunnel, as well as tested on full-scale vehicles in cross-country road tests.

"The most recent data based on road testing indicates that the device will save approximately one-half mile per gallon, an increase in fuel efficiency of about 10 percent," said Visser. "This translates into a savings on the order of about \$4,000 per year for a truck running 150,000 miles at \$2.50 a gallon of fuel."

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