

Emissions Testing Comes to an End

After 26 years I/M program ends

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ANCHORAGE - For the last month, days have been pretty slow at the Qwik Lube on the intersection of Old Seward Highway and Tudor Road. Technicians said they used to be busy with nearly 50 emissions tests performed every day for 26 years.

"We know that the emissions test has worked and has done its job in cleaning up the air in Anchorage," said Qwik Lube Manager Michelle Lancaster.

Owners of emissions testing businesses said they knew the end of the program was near, but didn't think it would come so soon. They expected a six month grace period, but the Anchorage Assembly voted to end it March 1.

"We have lost five employees because of cuts, now that we haven't had the six months to reorganize and restructure," said Lancaster. "It was basically overnight."

About 30 percent of its revenue came from emissions tests. "That is a fairly large chunk of your income gone – instantly," she said.

They plan to provide others services like tire maintenance to make up for the loss. Most drivers are happy about the news though.

"It means spending less money to keep my car on the road, and considering next month is when my tags are up, that really makes me happy," said Anchorage resident Darlene Fournet.

Some however have mixed emotions.

"Down the road it's going to hurt," said Anchorage driver Victoria Moran. "It's definitely going to come back at us, but in the long run it saves us a couple hundred dollars every couple years."

But all agree it's just one more change they'll learn to live with.