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AUTO TRENDS

Hybrid Drivers Ed

The folks who launched the innovative trafficschool.com a decade ago have now stepped out to combine what they like best: internet-based interactive curriculum, behind-the-wheel driver's training, and an eye toward the environment with a fleet made up entirely of hybrid cars. Serving the greater Los Angeles area, Drivers Ed Direct has incorporated eye-catching graphics on its Toyota Prius and Ford Escape Hybrid vehicles to make it evident to all that those taking behind-the-wheel training are doing so in an environmentally positive way.

Drivers Ed Direct goes the extra mile by offering door-to-door service, with instructors picking up students and dropping them off at school, home, or work. All vehicles are equipped with a video camera that digitally records training sessions so students can review their performance after on-road sessions. Plus, instruction goes beyond mandatory DMV requirements by offering the kind of educational edge needed by teens today, such as how to drive safely in an environment filled with cellphones, navigation systems, PDAs, and iPods ("pull over" is the operative instruction here). Since parental involvement is important in a teen's driver's training experience, Drivers Ed Direct provides parents real-time access to status reports on their teen's driving via e-mail and the Internet.

While Drivers Ed Direct only offers its behind-the-wheel training in the L.A. area at present, the company does offer an award-winning "Rules of the Road" DVD to supplement behind-the-wheel instruction anywhere in the country. The DVD features seven interactive driver's education lessons using a combination of live-action video clips and 3D graphics, a virtual driving simulator, and interactive quizzes. Need to know more? Head for the company's home page at www.driverseddirect.com for information on Drivers Ed Direct or to order the \$34.95 DVD. — *Stefanie Wright*

