

Valley Air News

A publication of the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District

Winter | 2005

Additional DMV fee will help clean Valley's air

A surcharge of \$2 per vehicle registered in the San Joaquin Valley will help pay for crucial air-quality projects, such as cleaner school bus fleets and transit vehicles.

The additional surcharge, collected through annual vehicle registrations in the eight counties of the Valley Air District, was approved by the District's Governing Board in December.

"There is no way the San Joaquin Valley could achieve clean-air standards without voluntary programs like this," said Seyed Sadredin, the Air District's deputy director.

The District does not have the authority to set tailpipe-emission standards for motor vehicles, which cause more than half of the Valley's ozone (smog) problem and a significant portion of the particulate problem. But

since the early 1990s, the state Department of Motor Vehicles has authorized state air districts to collect a surcharge for emission-reduction projects.

Since 1993, the Air District has invested more than \$100 million into voluntary incentive programs such as those that

"It's a tremendous payoff to all Valley residents for such a small personal investment."

Dave Crow, Air District director.

provide cities, counties, industry and individuals with funds for pollution-control projects. Such projects have included van pools; converting tractors, buses and street sweepers to run on natural gas; constructing bike paths; removing gross-polluting vehicles from use; and

providing rebates for hybrid vehicles, in addition to helping farmers replace diesel engines in irrigation pumps.

The surcharge increase brings the total annual air-quality surcharge to \$7 per vehicle. Funds from the additional \$2 surcharge will be used for a variety of emission reduction projects, including cleaner-emission school buses, locomotives, other transit vehicles, and agricultural equipment. The new surcharge will enable the District to leverage an additional \$7 - \$10 million annually in state grants to Valley businesses, organizations and individuals.

"It's a tremendous payoff to all Valley residents for such a small personal investment," said Dave Crow, the Air District's director. "This small investment per vehicle will yield great returns to all Valley residents in the form of cleaner air."

2005 kids calendar shows way to a clearer future

More than 700 Valley school children submitted drawings depicting their interpretations of a world without air pollution for the 2005 Valley Air District's Clean Air Kids calendar.

Fourteen creative and colorful drawings by student artists in kindergarten through high school were selected for the educational wall calendar. Some of the winning drawings are showcased throughout this newsletter. "Rainbows can't sparkle if the air is dirty," a whimsical crayon and acrylic drawing by kindergartner Hediko Thao, is featured on the cover.

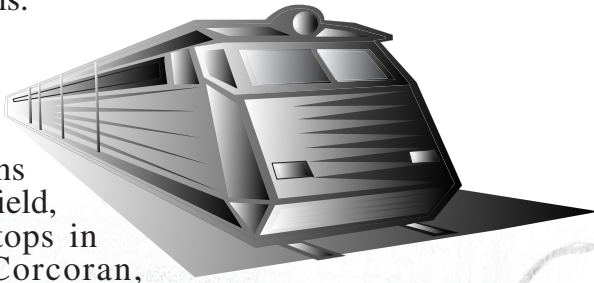
See the names of all this year's calendar artists on page 3.

Riding the rail is a great alternative to driving

If you are planning a trip within the San Joaquin Valley, to Sacramento, San Francisco or even Yosemite, the train may be a great alternative to driving. Several daily departures are offered aboard Amtrak's San Joaquins route to all of these popular destinations.

Amtrak's
San
Joaquins

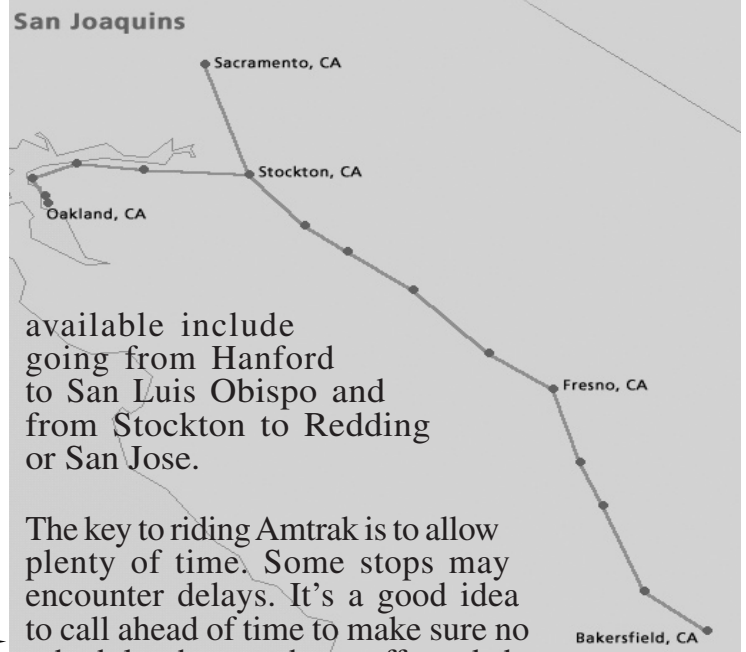
train begins in Bakersfield, making stops in Wasco, Corcoran, Hanford, Fresno, Madera, Merced, Turlock/Denair, Modesto and Stockton. In Stockton the route splits, with some trains continuing on to Sacramento, and others going to the San Francisco Bay area. Riders not on a direct route to their desired destination may switch to a bus at that point.



Stops on the Sacramento route include Lodi, Sacramento and Davis. The Bay-area trains continue to Antioch, Martinez, Richmond, Emeryville and Oakland. Bus service is provided from Emeryville to various locations in San Francisco. Another option is to end your Amtrak trip in Richmond and take the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) into San Francisco. Richmond is one of the main BART stations, and Amtrak even sells discounted BART tickets in the dining car.

Amtrak also offers bus service to Yosemite National Park from Merced on a daily basis. Taking the bus offers a great way to see Yosemite while helping decrease the amount of air pollution created by vehicle traffic in the park.

Bus service is provided by Amtrak from Bakersfield to various locations in Los Angeles and as far south as San Diego. Some of the other train-bus connections



available include going from Hanford to San Luis Obispo and from Stockton to Redding or San Jose.

The key to riding Amtrak is to allow plenty of time. Some stops may encounter delays. It's a good idea to call ahead of time to make sure no schedule changes have affected the established departure/arrival times. Taking Amtrak on the San Joaquins train should take about the same time as driving, or slightly longer depending on if the trip involves a bus connection.

In addition to sparing our Valley's air, Amtrak can offer a relaxing alternative to driving. Many train cars have reclining seats, tables and even electrical outlets to plug in games or a computer. A dining car is available with a variety of food items and drinks. Travelers also are permitted to bring food aboard the train.

Amtrak frequently offers travel specials, such as kids up to age 15 riding free or half price with an adult. Other specials available on some routes include multi-ride tickets, a 10-ride ticket valid for 45 days, or a pass valid for an entire calendar month. Many Amtrak stations offer Quik-Trak

self-service ticket machines that can eliminate waiting in line when paying with a credit or debit card.

For more information about routes, fares and other services call an Amtrak reservations agent at 1-800-USA-RAIL or visit their web site at www.amtrak.com.

Save the date for the Clean Air Business Expo



The Clean Air Business Exposition, to be held on April 28, 2005 at the Fresno Convention Center, Valdez Hall, will focus on the vital role businesses and business leaders can play to create the Clean Air Economy. Please consider attending this great event sponsored by Valley CAN and the Greater Fresno Area Chamber of Commerce. For more information visit www.fresnochamber.com or www.valley-can.org.

Students learn relationship of cycling and air quality

About 30 young cyclists from Fresno's University High School rode to the Air District office on January 14th to learn a little more about air-quality issues and how biking helps reduce air pollution.

The students, led by instructors Mark Roberts and Garrett Benslay, were wrapping up the first two-week-long cycling class at the highly popular charter high school, on the campus of California State University, Fresno. Students who attend University High School, about two miles from the Air District's office, must meet rigorous admission standards, including musical accomplishment and scientific aptitude.

"I knew that everyone was trying to save the planet and clean the air, but I didn't know we had a place like this in Fresno," said freshman Courtney Veater. "It's cool."

After a series of informal presentations in the Governing Board Room by Air District staff including supervising air quality technician Evan Shipp, on air-quality science (which generated a few challenging technical questions from the students), public education administrator Jaime Holt, on issues and governance, and personnel director Carolyn Rose, on District employment opportunities, the students broke out into small groups and wound their way through the building, chatting with District staff and observing their work.

"It's important that people who work here believe in what they're doing," Carolyn Rose told them, and judging from their thoughtful questions and enthusiasm, these students took her words to heart.

Calendar artists come from all over Valley

Hediko Thao, is featured on the cover of this year's Air District calendar. She is in kindergarten at Taylor Elementary School in Stockton.

Other artists featured in this year's calendar include:

Shaunee Thompson, also from Taylor Elementary School

Erica Medina, Arvin High School

Amalia Gutierrez, Arvin High School

Eri Tomita, Hart Elementary School in Bakersfield

Sarai Hernandez, Parlier Jr. High School

Saira Delgado, Sanger Academy

Joseph Castillo, II, Sanger Academy

Manuel Cruz, Central West High School in Fresno

Alexi Kimura, Kastner Middle School in Fresno

Danielle Betita, Oak Grove Elementary School in Visalia

Adam Denison, Royal Oaks Elementary School in Visalia

Edgar Saldivar, Coalinga High School

Alexandria Ramirez, Cole Elementary School in Clovis

This year the clean air message for each month is presented in both English and Spanish. The Air District's two major public outreach programs to improve air quality, "Spare the Air" and "Check Before You Burn," are both highlighted in the calendar.

The 2005 calendar was distributed free to schools, community groups, health care facilities, churches, community-based organizations and individuals. To see the calendar artwork, go to www.valleyair.org and click on For Kids Only.



Visiting students line up their bikes outside the District office.

Board Meeting Highlights

For complete agendas and minutes, please visit the Valley Air District's web site at www.valleyair.org.

November

Board discussed increasing DMV fees by \$2 to fund mobile source reduction programs. After a tie vote prevented passage of the surcharge, the Board voted unanimously to revisit the issue during its December meeting with more specific information on how funds will be used.

December

- Board named Stanislaus County Supervisor Tom Mayfield as 2005 Governing Board Chair, and Bakersfield City Councilmember Mike Maggard as Vice Chair.

- Board adopted increase to DMV surcharge of \$2 for mobile source and other emission-reduction programs.

- Board received and filed the District's annual offset equivalency report to the EPA.

January

- Board unanimously approved District's 2005 Legislative Platform.

- Board received a detailed report by Administrative Services on the history and status of the District's incentive programs.

- Board held a public hearing to consider adopting amendments to rules 4403, 4451 and 4452, and to consider adopting new rules 4409 and 4455. At the discretion of the Chair and APCO, the Board voted to revisit the rules at a later date.

Meeting Schedule

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 17. Unless otherwise noted, all meetings are held at 9 a.m. in the Central Region Office, 1990 E. Gettysburg Ave., Fresno, (559) 230-6000.

Governing Board meetings are also held via video teleconference in the offices below:

Northern Region Office, 4230 Kiernan Ave., #130, Modesto, (209) 557-6400

Southern Region Office, 2700 M St., Suite 275, Bakersfield, (661) 326-6900.

Valley Air District Directory

2005 Governing Board

San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District

Smog Info Line (800) 766-4463
 Smoking Vehicle (800) 559-9247
 Job Line (559) 230-6019
 Valley Air District Web Site www.valleyair.org

Northern Region Office

Complaint Line (800) 281-7003
 Small Business Assistance (209) 557-6446

Central Region Office

Complaint Line (800) 870-1037
 Small Business Assistance (559) 230-5888

Southern Region Office

Complaint Line (800) 926-5550
 Small Business Assistance (661) 326-6969

Chair

Supervisor, Thomas Mayfield, Stanislaus County

Vice Chair

Councilmember, Mike Maggard, City of Bakersfield

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 Supervisor Tony Barba, Kings County
 Supervisor Ronn Dominici, Madera County
 Supervisor Barbara Patrick, Kern County
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 Supervisor J. Steven Worthley, Tulare County
 Supervisor Jack A. Sieglock, San Joaquin County
 Councilmember Dan Prince, City of Ripon
 Supervisor Susan B. Anderson, Fresno County

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