

VALLEY AIR NEWS

District adopts stricter wood-burning rules, bigger wood-stove change-out incentive

As part of the 2008 PM2.5 Plan to clean up dangerous particle pollution, the District is amending Rule 4901 Wood-Burning Fireplaces and Wood-Burning Heaters. On Oct. 16, the District's Governing Board approved a more stringent residential wood-burning rule.

The amendments include:

- Lowering the threshold for mandatory curtailments from 66 to 30 micrograms per cubic meter, resulting in more days when burning solid fuel will be prohibited.
- Removing the "Discouraged" stage from wood-burning declarations.
- Removing the elevation exemption so that residences above 3,000 feet will be subject to mandatory curtailments unless they qualify for another exemption (such as the exemption for those who do not have natural-gas service).

Since the rule's adoption in 2003, an "unhealthy" air-quality forecast (above 150 on the AQI) for any day from November through February meant that use of a wood-burning fireplace, stove or pellet-fueled heater would be prohibited.

By lowering the threshold to 30 micrograms per cubic meter of PM2.5, wood-burning prohibitions would be called when air quality is near or above EPA's newest, health-based standards for PM2.5.

On all other days, Valley residents who intend to burn wood are asked to burn as cleanly as possible, using dry,

seasoned fire wood or a manufactured wood log, preferably in an EPA Phase II-certified wood-burning heater, or even better, using a pellet stove or insert.

Residents who do not have natural-gas service or any other means to heat their homes are exempt from the rule's wood burning prohibitions. Until passage of these amendments, residents living above 3,000 feet in elevation were also exempt.

In addition to these rule amendments, the District hopes to further reduce wintertime particulate matter emissions by expanding its annual Burn Cleaner program, which offers an incentive for residents to replace their wood-burning devices with cleaner-burning units.

During the change-out program in winter 2007 and 2008, residents could obtain a discount of up to \$350 for replacing their older wood-burning devices with new, cleaner units.

But, in early 2009, Burn Cleaner will offer larger cash discounts on approved units. There will also be a new component for qualified low income residents who wish to participate.

The San Joaquin Valley does not meet federal health standards for fine particulate matter and must pursue every feasible control measure to reach a 2015 attainment deadline. To view the complete rule, go to: http://www.valleyair.org/Workshops/public_workshops_idx.htm.

District's Bike to Work Day attracts riders from all over Valley

Hundreds of Valley cyclists participated in the Air District's first ever Bike-To-Work days in October -- some taking home great prizes for their peddling efforts.



Alan Kasparian proudly poses with the new bike he won from Rubber Soul Bicycles in Fresno.

Many, like the members of Bike Bakersfield, were already dedicated practitioners of the gas-saving activity, while others felt this was the perfect opportunity for great exercise and a fun, alternative to driving their cars to work.

Fun Sport Bikes in Modesto, Rubber Soul Bicycles in Fresno and Snider's Cyclery in Bakersfield partnered with the Air District, offering complimentary refreshments and prizes for participating cyclists as an incentive to reduce vehicle emissions and traffic.



A young cyclist signs up to win a free bike in Bakersfield.

Some riders won new bikes, gift certificates to partnering bike shops, bicycle helmets and other great prizes.

Local police departments provided bike escorts on designated routes, adding safety and camaraderie to the events.

In addition to local police and partnering bike shops, the Air District also thanks Village Baking Co., Valley Sporting Goods, Kern Commuter Connection and Savemart for their contributions to these events.

Below, participants in Modesto prepare for a police-escorted ride from McHenry Ave. to the Downtown area.

