

Wood-burning season to begin



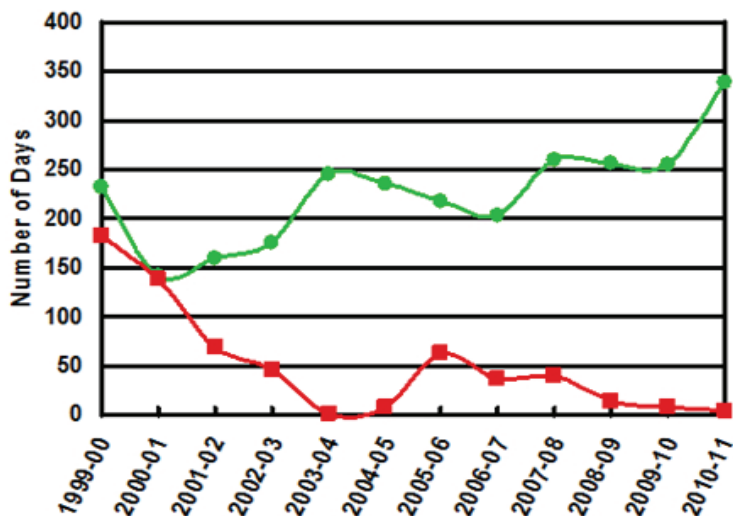
The program credited with drastically reducing wintertime particulate matter (PM) pollution in the San Joaquin Valley begins its ninth season Nov. 1. Check Before You Burn prohibits residential wood burning on winter days when particle pollution from wood smoke may cause the Valley to exceed the federal health standard for PM.

From November through February, wood-burning forecasts are issued by county for the air basin. This includes San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Merced, Madera, Fresno, Kings, Tulare and the Valley portion of Kern counties.

Residential wood burning is the largest source of PM during winter months, emitting an average of 17 tons per day of the pollutant. The Valley's topography, meteorology and geography provide ideal conditions for a build-up of pollution at ground level during winter months. Health consequences of high levels of PM can include reduced lung function, asthma exacerbations, and an increase in the risk of heart attacks.

Although the Valley was declared in attainment of the federal health standard for PM10 (particulate matter 10 microns in diameter) in 2006, the air basin still fails to meet the more stringent standard for fine-particulate matter (PM2.5). But, even those levels are improving.

The graph below illustrates air quality during winter months from 1990 to last season with green indicating good air quality and red indicating bad.



Before lighting a fire in a wood-burning fireplace, a wood stove or pellet-fueled heater, make sure to Check Before You Burn by calling 1-800-SMOG-INFO or checking the Air District's website. You can also sign up on the District's website to receive automatic daily air quality forecasts and wood-burning declarations by e-mail.

Kids' calendar contest brings in talented Valley artists

Every year, the Air District invites student artists from throughout the Valley to show off their talent and help educate the public about Healthy Air Living by entering the District's Healthy Air Living Kids Calendar Contest.

This year, proved once again, that children in the San Joaquin Valley are among the world's most talented artists through their depictions of how we can all live a Healthy Air Life.

Fourteen beautiful, full-color pictures with messages about cleaning the Valley's air have been selected from students in kindergarten through 12th grade, representing various Valley communities.

Here are this year's winners:

- Aria Delgado, Sanger Academy Charter School, Sanger (cover)
- Isaiah Armenta, Cherry Avenue Middle School, Tulare
- Isaac Avila, Parlier Junior High School, Parlier
- Valerie Bailey, Maple Elementary School, Tulare
- Allison Carroll, Snelling Merced Falls Elementary, Snelling
- America Castellanos, James Madison Elementary School, Madera
- Refugio Felix, Snelling Merced Falls Elementary School, Snelling
- Aaron Gaitan-Romero, Andrew Jackson Elementary School, Selma
- Gabriella Knutson, Leo B. Hart Elementary School, Bakersfield
- Kayli Leyva, Tamarack Elementary School, Avenal
- Alexander Lopez, Elliott Alternative Education Center, Modesto
- Gonzalo Martinez, Parlier Junior High School, Parlier
- Kaitlin Frias-Miranda, San Joaquin County
- Ben Wilemon and Nate Wilemon, Sing Lum Elementary School, Bakersfield

The 2012 Healthy Air Living bilingual calendars, free to the public, are expected to be ready for distribution by late December to Valley schools, libraries, healthcare facilities, non-profit organizations and Healthy Air Living partners.



Tune-In and Tune-Up events coming up

You can get a free emissions test to see if your car can pass its next Smog Check. If you don't pass, you may be eligible for up to \$500 toward repairs. Each event takes place from 9 am to 3 pm, serving free refreshments.

Here are the next Tune-In and Tune-Up events:

- Saturday, Oct. 29, Merced County Fairgrounds, Merced
- Saturday, Nov. 19, Modesto Junior College, West Campus, Modesto
- Saturday, Feb. 4th, West Hills College, Lemoore

Make sure to have your current vehicle registration with you.