

Air-quality regulators seek input

BY SARAH RUBY, Californian staff writer

Source: Seyed Sadredin, air pollution control officer at the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District

Bakersfield Californian, Saturday, July 22, 2006

Locals are invited to talk air quality with those whose job it is to clean it up.

Seyed Sadredin, the San Joaquin Valley's top air regulator, and others will convene in Delano and Bakersfield next Wednesday to discuss air problems and strategies to solve them.

Here's a rundown, frequently-asked-question style, of a few things that might come up on Wednesday. We hear so much bad news about the valley's air. Is there any good news?

Yes. Some 500 pollution regulations have cut emissions from stationary sources -- factories, refineries and other non-moving polluters -- by at least half since the early 1990s. Also, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is taking measures to recognize the valley for having gone three years without a violation of the federal standard for dust and other coarse particles.

Are we going to meet the 2013 deadline for reducing ozone pollution, also known as smog?

If we do, it's not going to be easy. We'll need to reduce ozone emissions by 60 percent, the district says. With its powers limited to regulating pollution from stationary sources, the district only controls 40 percent of the valley's emissions, according to district figures. The other 60 percent -- cars, trucks, ships, planes and anything else that moves -- is regulated by state and federal agencies.

Can we get an extension on the ozone rule?

Yes. The district could push its deadline to 2020 by accepting that its pollution is "severe," and it could have until 2024 if it goes to "extreme."

Can the district achieve the ozone standard by only cutting emissions from stationary sources?

No. The district could shut down all businesses in the valley and still not meet this standard. By the same token, we could eliminate all diesel trucks and still not make it. These aren't serious proposals, but they show we'll need to be creative and hope new technology rescues us from dire measures.

The district will revisit its existing controls on businesses, but regulators doubt cuts from industry will account for half the reductions we need. The cuts have to come from everywhere, the district says -- from businesses, trucks, cars and individuals.

SJ Valley air board to meet in Modesto

Modesto Bee, Monday, July 24, 2006

The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District will host a town hall meeting in Modesto this week. Discussion at the Friday session will focus on valley air quality and the new federal health-based standards for ozone emissions. The meeting will be from 9 a.m. to noon at the air district offices, 4800 Enterprise Way. There will be a series of six meetings throughout the district. More information is available at: www.valleyair.org/Town_Hall/Town_Hall_Meetings.htm.

Other meeting sites:

Bakersfield: Wednesday, 1 to 4 p.m., air district office.

Delano: Wednesday, 7 to 10p.m., César Chávez High School.

Fresno: Thursday, 1 to 4p.m., air district office.

Huron: Thursday, 7 to 10p.m., Huron Middle School.

Stockton: Friday, 2:30 to 5:30 p.m., San Joaquin County Council of Governments office.

Spare the Air day announced for Monday

Bakersfield Californian, Monday, July 24, 2006

Air quality will be unhealthy for sensitive groups Monday, prompting the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District to declare a "Spare the Air" day for the valley portion of Kern County.

Here are some tips for sparing the air:

- Shop on the Internet.
- Postpone unnecessary trips in your car.
- Car pool.
- Use an electric starter instead of lighter fluid to start your barbecue.
- Don't top off your gas tank.
- Bring your lunch to work.
- Don't ride off-road vehicles or run gas-powered lawn equipment.
- Make sure paints and solvents are water-based instead of oil-based.
- Do anything that will save gasoline or electricity.

Heat refuses to let up

2nd death reported as mercury reaches 111 again

By MERRILL BALASSONE - BEE STAFF WRITER

Modesto Bee, Monday, July 24, 2006

The area continued to broil Sunday, resulting in numerous medical calls and an overheated transformer that cut power to a Modesto senior housing complex for several hours.

The power failure at Ralston Tower, at 17th and I streets, trapped two residents in elevators and left more than 100 others without air conditioning Sunday afternoon. Medical staff checked three residents, but no one was hospitalized, officials said.

Firefighters, Modesto Irrigation Department workers and paramedics responded just before 2:30 p.m. They managed to establish enough power to free the trapped residents from the elevators two hours later, Fire Capt. Doug Webb said.

MID workers were able to fix the transformer and get the air conditioning turned on just before 7 p.m., Webb said.

"This was the worst experience of my life," said Riff Kurmanay, 69, who said he lay on the elevator floor to stay cool while waiting to be rescued. "I guess I'm not young anymore."

Kurmanay sipped bottled water in the lobby with dozens of other residents who fanned themselves with newspapers as maintenance workers sprayed the transformer with hoses outside.

Also Sunday, a second heat-related death was reported in the Northern San Joaquin Valley after a resident at a Stockton nursing home died when the air-conditioning system failed.

More than 100 patients were evacuated early Sunday from the Beverly Healthcare Center. One patient died and another was hospitalized in critical condition.

On Saturday, one patient died of heart failure apparently caused by heat at Doctors Medical Center after being admitted with a 106-degree temperature, hospital officials said.

Two others were hospitalized with 108-degree temperatures, including one who remained in critical condition Sunday. The hospital would not release any further information.

Dr. John Elliott of Memorial Medical Center said the hospital admitted about a dozen patients for symptoms related to heat illness, including some residents transferred from the Beverly Healthcare Center. None of the cases was critical.

Elliott said heat-related illnesses range from the first stages of cramps and weakness to more extreme stages, which include nausea and vomiting.

The elderly are among those facing the highest risk, Elliott said, because they often don't drink enough water and can be taking medications that are dehydrating.

Sunday's high temperature matched Saturday's of 111, according to the Modesto Irrigation District. Today's high is expected to be 107, though the low is expected to drop 12 degrees, from 86 Sunday to 74 today. Highs are expected to go down a degree or two each day this week, though AccuWeather forecasters don't expect the high to get below 99 degrees until Thursday.

Record demand for power likely

Statewide, the California Independent System Operator expects power demand to hit another record today as businesses and offices closed for the weekend reopen.

The ISO estimates demand to peak at a new record of 52,000 megawatts about 4 p.m.

Stage 1 and 2 emergencies - meaning voluntary power cutbacks - are likely, and the ISO said a Stage 3 emergency - rolling blackouts - is possible.

The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District declared today a Spare the Air day in Stanislaus and Merced counties, but not in San Joaquin.

At Ralston Tower on Sunday, Mary Alice Connor, a 12-year resident, walked down the seven flights of stairs from her room for the first time since her knee replacement eight years ago. She uses a cane to walk.

"I thought of 9-11 and figured if they could walk down 30 floors, I could walk down seven," she said. "I couldn't stay in that room."

Larry Madden, 72, said he was thankful his caretaker, Sue Bandy, sent firefighters to bring him down to the lobby from his apartment. Madden said he had bought a \$200 air conditioner days ago to substitute for the sometimes unreliable air-conditioning system in the building.

"I was in bad shape," he said.

Several residents said maintenance crews have been scrambling to fix a broken air-conditioning system in recent days as the heat wave has intensified. Madden said the air-conditioning system has been a "constant problem" in his seven years as a tenant. Managers were not available to respond.

At nearby Kindred Hospital, firefighters helped move about 20 patients from a wing of the hospital where temperatures reached in the high 80s at 6:45 p.m.

"The air conditioner is not keeping up with the heat," Capt. Glenn Kramer said. "We're just being proactive in our concerns, with the disaster that happened up in Stockton."

Kramer said firefighters told hospital administration to quickly replace or fix the air conditioning unit that was not functioning properly.

"The people there are wonderful; it's just the wing there that has old, antiquated ventilation," said Paul Daniel Tunison, who was visiting his father. "The administrative offices are ice-cold."

Officials said Sunday the final tallies from Saturday's X-Fest in downtown Modesto showed 15 people were taken to local hospitals for heat exhaustion and intoxication.

None were in critical condition, police Lt. Dan Inderbitzen said.

Capt. Mike Miller of the Modesto Fire Department said about 45 people were evaluated for heat-related illnesses throughout the day. Alcohol sold at the event exacerbated the sickness from the sweltering heat.

"Alcohol and heat don't go together," Miller said. "If they had a choice between a two-dollar water and a two-dollar beer, they chose the beer."

Unfazed by the heat

People venture out to eat, shop, play

By PATRICK GIBLIN - BEE STAFF WRITER

Modesto Bee, Saturday, July 22, 2006

It was hot Friday, but not record-breaking hot.

Today should be a different story, according to the National Weather Service, as temperatures in Modesto and around the Northern San Joaquin Valley could spike to 110.

Friday's high reached 107 between 3 and 4 p.m., according to the Modesto Irrigation District's weather station in downtown Modesto. That was one degree shy of the record for July 21. The National Weather Service station at the Modesto Airport recorded a high of 108.

Yet, while most residents showed their need to keep cool - records were set for local and state power usage - some people didn't seem to mind the heat.

They still shopped for cars, ate lunch outdoors and got in a few rounds of golf Friday. This evening, thousands are expected to show up for the X-Fest music festival in downtown Modesto.

"You just get used to the heat," said Daniel Thomas of Merced, as he ate a spicy burrito Friday at the El Mexicano taco truck in downtown Modesto with his wife and daughter. "You just have to remember to drink lots of fluids."

Fact is, people need to eat, Thomas said. Employees at the taco truck said business was doing well all day.

Some people also need a car, said Dennis Lanigan, managing partner of Mistlin Honda in Modesto. He said business was strong this week at the auto dealer.

"I can't believe how well business is going, because the heat is brutal in our lot," Lanigan said. "But July and August are when the summer clearances are offered, and when someone needs a car, they need a car. The heat is not going to get in the way."

The heat Friday didn't interrupt some people's plans to have fun. Funworks in Modesto reported a steady stream of customers Friday. But those customers stayed inside the air-conditioned arcade during the afternoon, forsaking the miniature golf, go-carts and batting cages, said Nikki McGuire, shift manager for the business.

"When it cools down during the evening, more people will take advantage of our outdoor activities," McGuire said. "It's still summer vacation and people want to have fun."

Employees at the River Oaks Golf Course said the same thing. The course was crowded early Friday morning but empty at 4 p.m., giving employee Adam Dusi of Ceres the driving range to himself.

"Normally on a Friday, this place would be packed with golfers who took off from work early," Dusi said. "But it's just too hot for that this afternoon. It will pick up later."

The need to stay inside was reflected in the demand for power. MID and state officials reported peak power demand records in the afternoon.

The MID peaked at 669 megawatts at 4:32 p.m., beating Thursday's record of 646, MID spokeswoman Maree Hawkins said.

"There was a big food-processing load, people's tolerances are down and air conditioners worked a little harder," she said.

As for the system, she said, "everything is doing what it's supposed to do."

The California Independent System Operator, which monitors state power consumption, reported a record of 49,036 megawatts at 4:28 p.m., shattering Monday's high mark of 46,560.

Hawkins cautioned residents and businesses that keeping cool will come with a price.

"We're all going to have sticker shock when our bills come in," she said.

There was early relief from the heat Friday. Some clouds from a thunderstorm in the Sierra Nevada drifted into the Northern San Joaquin Valley about 3:30 p.m., dropping the temperature a few degrees by 6 p.m., typically the hottest part of the day.

Those clouds, however, probably will trap humidity in the valley, keeping the temperature from dropping below 85 degrees this morning, the National Weather Service forecast. That means today will start a few degrees warmer than Friday, increasing the chance of having temperatures of 110 or higher.

Still, Modesto will be cooler than Sacramento, which has a forecast high of 113 today.

The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District declared today a Spare the Air day because of the expected heat. Residents are asked to minimize car trips, use propane instead of charcoal if grilling and avoid using powered boats.

The National Weather Service also advised residents to drink plenty of water, minimize strenuous activities and stay in an air-conditioned room during the afternoon.

Some businesses already have assumed that most people will seek shelter in their air-conditioned rooms.

"We are expecting a really busy weekend from people trying to escape the heat," said Vikki Peters, general manager of the Galaxy 12 multiplex in Riverbank. "Plus, we have some big movies opening this weekend, so there's more reason to go to the theater."

In Brief

Staff Reports

Visalia Times-Delta, Saturday, July 22, 2006

District: Spare the Air this weekend

The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District has declared a "Spare the Air" Day Saturday and Sunday for Tulare County.

The alert was issued because of expectations that air quality in the area would be unhealthy for sensitive groups. The air pollution index — a measurement of the amount of particulate matter and other pollutants in the air — was at 109 degrees Friday in Tulare County, and it's expected to reach 116 degrees Saturday, according to information released by the district. Good to moderate air levels fall between 51 and 150.

On Spare the Air Days, people are encouraged to avoid driving, mowing lawns with gas-powered mowers and other activities that may add to pollution levels.

Share your ideas for cleaning the air

The public is invited to attend a meeting Wednesday in Delano where they can share ideas on generating cleaner air in the Central Valley. Officials with the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District also will discuss their progress in working to improve the air.

An informational flyer and background information is available online at www.valleyair.org, or call the Pollution Control District office in Fresno at 230-6000.

In Brief

Staff Reports

Visalia Times-Delta and Tulare Advance-Register, Friday, July 21, 2006

Spare the air on Friday and Saturday

The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District has forecast Spare the Air Days for Tulare County on Friday and Saturday.

The District has raised the school flag color to orange, deeming the air unhealthy for sensitive groups. Residents are asked to decrease activities that cause air pollution for the next 24 hours.

Information: (800) 766-4463.

Power sputters, rain falls

Hot weather, spots of rain and thunder plays tricks with electricity

Staff reports

Visalia Times-Delta, Friday, July 21, 2006

Burning transformers, arcing power wires and even a trace of strange but welcome rain combined for an odd Thursday afternoon and evening, officials said.

Southern California Edison officials reported some spotty electrical outages and brownouts that were scattered throughout parts of northern Visalia.

As of 5:40 p.m., an Edison official said he believed the outages were caused by thunderstorm activity around the area of Visalia, but the exact reason has not yet been determined.

A weather system bringing with it some light rain drifted in from the south between 9 and 10 p.m., dropping a drizzle of rain through 97-degree heat in a strange juxtaposition of seasons. Doppler radar showed a large cloud formation passing from the southeast of Visalia over the city and toward Fresno between 9 and 10 p.m.

The National Weather Service did forecast some cloud cover for Thursday night into this morning but did not forecast any precipitation.

The Visalia Fire Department responded to a call about 9 p.m. for what appeared to be an "overheated transformer," according to Visalia firefighter Mike Cromer. The transformer, in the 3900 block of South Verda Vista Avenue in Visalia, was at first reported to have caught fire and that some of the nearby power lines were arcing, Cromer said. No property appeared to be in jeopardy of catching fire because of the electrical glitches, Cromer added.

The National Weather Service also kept a heat advisory in effect for today for the entire South Valley, warning that heat indexes could reach as high as 110 degrees. The usual warnings apply, especially for children:

- Drink plenty of fluids.
- Stay indoors under air conditioning if possible.
- Stay out of the sun.
- Check on relatives and neighbors, especially the elderly.
- Ensure that pets and farm animals have access to adequate water and shade.
- Never leave children or pets alone in vehicles, even with windows partially open.

The San Joaquin Valley Unified Air Pollution Control District also issued a "Spare the Air" day for much of the San Joaquin Valley for today and Saturday.

The district suggests people cut down on errands using vehicles, that they also use propane grills instead of charcoal and postpone the use of watercraft.

Kings County's bounty helps to spare the air

By Seth Nidever, Sentinel Reporter

Hanford Sentinel, Thursday, July 20, 2006 (11:57 AM PDT)

HANFORD - Now is a good time to be grateful for all those corn, alfalfa and cotton fields covering Kings County.

The irrigated plant life does more than keep daytime temperatures a little lower than they otherwise would be.

The cultivated landscape, and the lower population it signifies, means less air pollution in Kings County as the 2006 Spare the Air season gets off to a quick start.

San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District officials declare Spare the Air days when ozone concentrations, driven upward along with soaring temperatures, creep into the unhealthy category.

The district asks people to curtail car trips, lawn mowing and any other activities that would release pollutants on those days.

The eight-county San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District has already declared 10 Spare the Air days in Kings County. Another is expected today as temperatures soar above 100 degrees for the seventh consecutive day in Hanford.

Last year the county saw only 12 Spare the Air days in the entire June to September season.

"We're not doing well compared to last year," said Brenda Turner, district spokeswoman.

Still, county residents breathe consistently cleaner air than their counterparts to the north and the south.

Chalk it up to fewer people and fewer cars, according to air district spokeswoman Brenda Turner.

Most of the 10 Spare the Air days in Kings County this year have been triggered by unhealthy predictions in Fresno or Kern counties.

The district ropes in adjacent counties when one county is expected to exceed 150, the air quality index that means unhealthy breathing for everybody.

The highest Kings County reading this summer has been 109, Turner said.

In air district parlance, that translates into unhealthy respiration for "sensitive groups" -- people with asthma, chronic pulmonary issues and heart attack risk.

Kings County often remains in the moderate pollution category, which is 51 to 100 on the air quality index.

Still, residents continue to suffer from the sweltering heat and stifling air of the current nationwide heat wave.

Temperatures in Hanford are forecast to remain above 100 degrees for the next several days, according to the National Weather Service.

Bay Area sizzles in record heat Temperatures reach 115, causing power outages for 50,000 homes

by Erik N. Nelson

Tri-Valley Herald, Sunday, July 23, 2006

From the Pacific coast to the Central Valley, from Mill Valley to Milpitas, it had never been as hot as it was Saturday. Not, at least, since the science of meteorology was invented.

And Livermore and Concord got the worst of it, with 115 degrees, three degrees higher than the record set in Livermore in 1917.

A blanket of high pressure cooked the Bay Area and state Saturday, smashing numerous temperature records, bringing on an unheard-of weekend statewide power emergency and sparking power outages affecting 50,000 Bay Area homes.

Coastal areas should see cooler temperatures today, but inland areas will continue to see 100-plus-degree temperatures, and power supplies are also expected to be strained.

But Saturday's Stage 1 emergency, during which the state's power reserves dropped below 7 percent of usage, flirted with Friday's all-time record of more than 49,000 megawatts peak demand and was the first such weekend event in memory, said Gregg Fishman, spokesman for the California Independent System Operator, which controls the ebb and flow of the state's electricity.

"People that have been in this business a long time are scratching their heads over this one," Fishman said.

Some power experts theorized that the electricity demand was so high because businesses that usually have their thermostats set at 90 or 95 degrees on weekends still had their air conditioning kick in.

Fishman credited Californians' conservation efforts with staving off a more dire emergency stage, which would have temporarily killed power to homes and businesses that volunteer for emergency power interruptions.

Fishman said that shortly after 1 p.m. there was an unexpected shutdown of a 750-megawatt power plant, reported on ISO logs as one of Duke Power's Moss Landing plants on Monterey Bay.

Meanwhile, temperatures reached 112 degrees near Tracy, 105 in Hayward and 107 in Fremont. Rescue workers took two young baseball players suffering from heat exhaustion from Pleasanton Sports Park to a nearby hospital, authorities said.

"It's extremely hot. I didn't grow up in the area, so I'm not used to the heat," said James Cox, assistant manager at the Les Schwab Tire Center in Livermore and an Oregon native, who helped keep the dozen or so workers cool with a chest of ice stocked with water and Gatorade.

Comparatively mild but still record-setting, temperatures in Oakland and San Francisco International Airports hit 98 degrees and 97 degrees, respectively.

The heat deprived Pacific Gas & Electric customers of power for varying periods, with most of the outages from equipment failure, said utility spokesman Paul Moreno as he waited for his own home's power to come back on.

Around the state, Palm Springs registered 119 degrees and Burbank 111 - only three degrees cooler than Death Valley - as of 3 p.m.

A forecast of continuing heat, lack of wind and high pressure today prompted the Bay Area Air Quality Management District to declare its fourth straight Spare the Air Day to ward off smog.

"It's predicted to reach three digits in terms of temperature in the eastern part of the Bay Area, and the air quality index is hitting three digits as well," air district spokeswoman Luna Salaver said.

The prediction of 127 on the air index means that in Contra Costa County, eastern Alameda County and inland Santa Clara County, people who are sensitive, such as the elderly and asthma sufferers, should limit their exposure by staying inside where it's air conditioned and avoid doing anything strenuous while the sun is shining.

Salaver said that all area residents can help keep smog from forming - even if they live in western areas unaffected by the heat or smog.

Among those options are not operating any gasoline-powered machines, cars included, and not using household chemicals, paints or coatings.

"It seems like there's a lot of traffic heading west, where it's cooler. If you're planning to go west to the coastal areas, make sure you carpool and you refuel after dark."

She added that overheated residents can also escape the East Bay on BART: "You could get off at Montgomery Street and take the 38 Geary Bus to Ocean Beach."

Staff writers Alejandro Alfonso in Pleasanton, Michelle Beaver in Hayward, Kristin Bender in Oakland and Suzanne Bohan in San Mateo contributed to this report.

Predictions heat up about area records that might fall

It's hot and getting hotter

By Ryan Lillis -- Bee Staff Writer

Sacramento Bee, Sat., July 22, 2006

The heat wave blanketing the region has a very good chance of breaking some records next week. And they're not the kind of records that lead to parades.

The string of consecutive days in which the temperature has risen above 100 degrees in Sacramento now stands at six, and forecasters are predicting at least five more days of triple-digit heat. That streak would break the previous record of nine straight days of 100-degree weather, set four times, most recently in 1996.

With predicted highs today and Sunday of around 108 degrees and the thermometer barely giving way at the start of next week, "our record is in jeopardy," said George Cline, a forecaster with the National Weather Service's Sacramento branch.

If you're a guy like Cline, that kind of news makes for interesting days because, as he said, "a lot of times summer is quite boring around here, but we've been kept pretty busy this year."

But if you're one of the other 1.8 million or so people who live in the Sacramento region, news of a record heat wave is about as comforting as a warm cup of tea in a sauna.

The heat has led to a handful of advisories and at least one record being broken already. The Sacramento Municipal Utility District broke its record for electrical demand on Friday with a peak reading of 3,140 megawatts at 4:35 p.m.

The previous mark was all of four days old, set on Monday with a reading of 3,080.

The Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District issued a "spare the air" advisory through Sunday, urging people to drive less and avoid using gas-powered yard tools such as lawn mowers and leaf blowers.

Air quality will be "unhealthy for sensitive groups" through Wednesday, the agency said.

There are a number of factors at work against us, turning this July into an unsettling month.

First, the trusty Delta breeze has shut off, thanks to a weak marine cloud layer off the Pacific that has been unable to push cooler air through the Carquinez Strait, Cline said.

Beyond the warm days, that phenomenon has also led to some balmy nights -- the lowest temperature recorded in Sacramento since Tuesday was 72 degrees.

Overall for the month, the average low temperature is nearly four degrees above normal, Cline said.

Not surprisingly, the average high temperature is also up, from 93.8 most years to 96.1 degrees this July.

Also at work is what the National Weather Service calls a "surge of monsoonal moisture" hitting us from Mexico.

That weather pattern usually strikes Arizona this time of year, leading to thunderstorms, but it has made its way north, resulting in frequent storms in the higher elevations east of Sacramento.

Cline said it was "very rare" for the monsoonal surge to reach us. He also said the moisture in the air has led to humidity readings in Sacramento as high as 60 percent this week, an abnormality for a place known for its dry heat.

The Sacramento heat wave seems tolerable compared to what's happening in other parts of the country: 570,000 homes and businesses in St. Louis were without power after destructive storms, a highway buckled from the heat near Oklahoma City, 28 deaths were blamed on the heat nationwide in the past week.

And of course, discussions of the heat often turn to the topic of global warming.

Susan L. Ustin, the director of the Western Regional Center for Global Environmental Change at UC Davis, said while one heat wave does not prove the global warming argument, trends like this are "clearly an indication of climate change."

"Any given month can be a bit warmer than average," she said.

"It's the change in the long-term trends to watch. Certainly it's unusual to have high temperatures like this and it's certainly unusual for the whole country to be experiencing this."

Smog, dangerous heat bring on region's 6th Spare the Air Day

By Michael Cabantuan, staff writer
S.F. Chronicle, Friday, July 21, 2006

Searing temperatures, low winds and continued higher-than-usual humidity are forecast for parts of the Bay Area today, promising a smoggy day of discomfort but leading to another day of free rides on public transportation.

The National Weather Service predicts record-high temperatures through Saturday across much of the Bay Area. Temperatures in the inland areas, including Livermore and Antioch, could reach 105 degrees -- a level forecasters called "dangerously hot."

Highs are expected near 100 in Kentfield and other parts of the North Bay, with temperatures well into the 80s, and closing in on 90, elsewhere around the bay. Weak sea breezes will provide a little relief at the coast, though it will still be warmer than usual.

Air quality officials expect the heat and lack of wind to cook up unhealthy levels of ground-level ozone, or smog, and have declared today the sixth Spare the Air Day of the season. It likely will be the final day of free transit for the summer smog season.

"This is a day folks should really take advantage of a free ride, whether they're going to work or somewhere else," said Luna Salaver, spokeswoman for the Bay Area Air Quality Management District. On Thursday, the fifth Spare the Air Day, the offer of a free ride continued to draw extra passengers to public transportation -- especially BART and ferries.

BART expected to carry an extra 28,000 riders -- an 8.5 percent increase -- based on morning passenger counts, spokesman Linton Johnson said. The Alameda/Oakland and Golden Gate ferries also hauled larger-than-normal crowds, according to regular users. Ridership figures for the ferries were not yet available.

Among the extra riders on the 7:05 a.m. Alameda/Oakland Ferry to San Francisco were two commuters who heeded the plea to take transit, though they had driven to the Jack London Square ferry terminal.

Michelle Stevens of Newark and Alison Renfro of Fremont usually drive together or use a combination of BART and driving to get their jobs in San Francisco. But the lure of a free ride on the ferry pulled them off Interstate 880. After the half-hour ride in the sunshine and fresh air, they were sold.

"It's great -- I'm going to start doing it every day," said Renfro, who works for Williams-Sonoma. "I'm already looking forward to getting off work so I can take it again."

Ferries and BART have been swamped by hundreds of extra riders on Spare the Air days -- many of them leisure travelers rather than commuters. In several cases, crowds forced some commuters to sit on the docks and wait for the next boat. That's prompted complaints about crowding and sparked a debate over the purpose of the free transit days.

Aboard the Alameda/Oakland Ferry, a group of regular commuters discussed the issue as they sat outside in the sun.

"The problem with Spare the Air Day is these weren't commuters," said Peter Deutsch, an Alameda commuter who's ridden the ferry for five years and has noticed a difference on Spare the Air Days. "They were people who decided midday that it would be a nice day for a free ferry ride. That backs things up. That's not what (Spare the Air Day) was designed for."

Transportation and air quality officials say that's not the case. The Spare the Air Day free-transit program aims to lure anyone -- commuter, leisure traveler or errand runner -- out of their car, Salaver said. It also seeks to introduce people to public transportation in hopes of getting them to ride it regularly -- or at least on days when smog is expected.

Randy Rentschler, spokesman for the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, acknowledged overcrowding problems on ferries and on BART -- but not on most other transit systems -- and said that's something that will need to be resolved for any future free-transit days.

"This is the first time we've done this, and we're learning a lot of lessons," he said. "One of those lessons is that we're attracting new customers -- and we want new customers -- but we have to make sure we're prepared for them."

Twenty-six transit systems will join in today's free-ride day. To handle anticipated crowds, Golden Gate Ferry will add a 7:30 a.m. departure from Larkspur, two extra boats at 2:05 p.m. and 4:15 p.m. from Sausalito, and an additional departure from San Francisco to Sausalito at 3:10 p.m.

The Metropolitan Transportation Commission funded the first three Spare the Air Days with \$7.5 million. When all three were used in June, it came up with \$5.3 million to pay for three more. Funding for additional free-transit days has not been discussed.

BART is free today for Spare the Air

Stockton Record, Friday, July 21, 2006

Bay Area Rapid Transit is free today for a second consecutive Spare the Air Day.

Free service begins at 4 a.m. today and lasts until 1 a.m. Saturday.

Spare the Air Day is a project of the Bay Area Air Quality Management District. Six Spare the Air Days have been declared this year.

Don't pack up the shorts yet: Heat still on

Sweltering conditions forecast to continue through weekend, with no relief in sight for days

By Michael Cabantuan and Cicero A. Estrella, staff writers

S.F. Chronicle, Saturday, July 22, 2006

A number of high-temperature records fell on Friday, and more could follow this weekend as the midsummer heat wave is expected to continue scorching the Bay Area.

The temperature rose to 83 degrees at San Francisco International Airport on Friday and erased the record of 80 set for that date in 1954. San Rafael notched 93 degrees to edge the previous high of 92 from 1986. In Oakland, the old mark of 79 from 2004 was replaced by an 83-degree reading. And Moffett Field far exceeded the 85 degrees from 1996 with 90.

Those spots were relatively cool and comfortable compared to the interior, where it reached 109 in Livermore, 108 at Lake Berryessa and 103 in Concord. National Weather Service forecasters warned that temperatures could rise as high as 110 Saturday before dipping back to the comparatively mild low 100s on Sunday.

"The whole Bay Area is going to roast," said Mike Delman, a meteorologist for the weather service in Monterey.

A slight cooling trend is expected for the beginning of next week, with the only promise of real relief looking to be about a week to 10 days away. Until then, the Bay Area can expect temperatures in the 80s around the bay and around triple digits in the inland hills and valleys.

"If we're going to set more records, it'll be during the weekend for sure," Delman said. "After that, we'll be out of the woods."

Short of fleeing town for cooler pastures, the National Weather Service recommends that people stay hydrated, check in on family and friends living alone, and not leave children and pets unattended in vehicles.

And, of course, stay indoors and enjoy the air conditioner.

The hot temperatures, unusually high humidity and slack winds made Friday a Spare the Air Day, the year's sixth and probably final free-transit day. As they did Thursday, riders flocked to transit, particularly the ferries and BART.

The Bay Area Air Quality Management District declared today another Spare the Air day, but with no free transit. Money for free public transit has been exhausted.

The Spare the Air pronouncement means that conditions are ideal for creating unhealthy levels of smog, and Bay Area residents are urged to avoid activities -- including driving -- that produce ground-level ozone.

People can also help by refueling cars after dusk, avoiding the use of gas-powered lawnmowers and other yard equipment, not using chemical pesticides or cleaning compounds that evaporate, putting off painting the house or staining the deck, starting the barbecue without using lighter fluid, and skipping the hair spray.

"Let it be a bad hair day," said Luna Salaver, spokeswoman for the air district.

Soaring temperatures prompt record power use, scattered outages

By Don Thompson, Associated Press Writer

In the Fresno Bee, Saturday, July 22, 2006

SACRAMENTO (AP) - Triple digit temperatures smashed records across California Saturday, straining thermometers and air conditioners and prompting dozens of scattered electricity outages that left residents sizzling.

A major Northern California power plant tripped off line as temperatures climbed, trimming electricity reserves below acceptable levels and prompting the state's grid manager to declare a "stage one emergency" while calling for conservation.

No relief was expected until at least midweek from a weather front that sent temperatures soaring even along the normally cool California coast and brought Midwest-style humidity steaming into the usually arid Central Valley.

Heat records were set throughout the San Francisco Bay area, including Livermore with 115 degrees, San Rafael with 108 degrees, and San Jose at 102 degrees, according to the National Weather Service. San Francisco's 87 degrees topped an 81-degree record set in 1917.

"All around the Bay area we're breaking records today," said Brooke Bingaman, a NWS meteorologist in Monterey. Temperatures were expected to cool overnight, though it may take several days for the hottest areas to feel relief, she said.

The Bay Area Air Quality Management District declared Sunday the year's eighth "Spare the Air" day, urging residents to conserve electricity and use public transportation to combat high air pollution levels.

Emergency workers scrambled to help heat exposure victims in downtown Los Angeles, where 99 degree temperatures broke the 96-degree record set in 1960.

The thermometer at Los Angeles International Airport read 86 degrees by early afternoon, breaking the 85-degree high set in 1960. Temperatures in Los Angeles' Woodland Hills section were expected to top the all-time record of 116 degrees set in 1985.

"We encourage everyone, especially the elderly and very young, to remain hydrated," said Los Angeles Fire Department spokesman Brian Ballton.

Records were set or tied at all five Central Valley recording locations: 109 degrees in Sacramento, 111 in Redding, and 112 in Red Bluff, Stockton and Modesto.

Power use across the state broke records Friday and again Saturday - unusual because it was the weekend.

"We are drawing on all available power," said Paul Moreno, a spokesman for Pacific Gas and Electric Co., which serves about 14 million people in northern and central California.

The Los Angeles Department of Water and Power and San Diego Gas & Electric also reported a second day of record-breaking power consumption, but said they could meet demand.

"This is a record for a weekend when offices and factories are closed. This is a record for anytime," Moreno said. "People have been good about conserving, but sooner or later fatigue sets in."

Power generators urged consumers to set air conditioners to 78 degrees or higher, use fans, pull drapes and turn off unnecessary lights and appliances.

The California Independent System Operator, which manages the state's power grid, isn't predicting deliberate rolling blackouts of the sort that darkened the state during the shortages of 2000 and 2001.

But dozens of localized electricity outages in the Los Angeles, Sacramento, San Diego and San Francisco Bay areas were blamed on high demand that overloaded equipment, leaving thousands of residents stifling in the heat.

More than 50,000 people in the Bay Area were without power Saturday afternoon because of heat-related outages, said PG&E spokesman Paul Moreno. Power was expected to be restored to most people by Saturday night or early Sunday morning, but customers were told to brace for more outages as the high temperatures continued.

A collision of two unusual weather patterns has helped turn the state into a sauna for a week, said National Weather Service forecaster Kathy Hoxsie in Sacramento.

A weak marine layer off the Pacific means higher temperatures along the coast and inland. Meanwhile, "monsoonal moisture" from Mexico that usually heads to Arizona this time of year is covering California instead.

That has brought lightning storms in the Sierra Nevada mountains instead of thunderstorms in the Southwest states, and high humidity and hot nights to a region known for its "dry heat" and nighttime cooling.

Meanwhile, the California Division of Occupational Safety and Health was probing the state's first suspected work-related death caused by heat this year.

Investigators believe Bakersfield gardener Joaquin Ramirez, 38, may have died of heat stroke after collapsing on the job late Wednesday, said division spokesman Dean Fryer. Last year, Cal-OSHA reported a record-breaking 13 heat-related deaths, most involving construction and agricultural workers.

The Kern County Coroner's office was investigating whether scorching temperatures were responsible for four deaths over the past two weeks.

State's power supply starting to feel strain from record heat wave

By Glen Martin, staff writer
S.F. Chronicle, Sunday, July 23, 2006

California basted Saturday in a heat wave described by meteorologists as unprecedented, breaking temperature records and pushing the state within a hair's breadth of a power crisis.

And things aren't going to cool down anytime soon.

Even veteran meteorologists expressed amazement at the scorching temperatures.

"Tons of records were smashed, and not just in the interior part of the state," said Basil Newmerzhycky, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service.

Mike Pechner, a consulting meteorologist based in Cordelia, said Saturday and today should set state temperature records not just for their dates but for the entire month of July.

"This is the hottest weather we've seen in California in at least a decade or more," he said.

Vallejo reached 111 degrees Saturday, which Newmerzhycky called "unfathomable."

"It is very, very rare for Vallejo to hit even 100, let alone 111," he said. "When all is said and done, this could be the worst heat wave ever for the Central Valley."

Newmerzhycky said the Sacramento record for consecutive days exceeding 100 degrees is nine, and the city has now posted seven straight days of such temperatures.

"We're not going to see any relief at all until Tuesday or Wednesday, if then," he said.

Towns in the East Bay, and the Delta in particular, were wilting. Newmerzhycky said an unusual weather pattern was the reason for the Delta's grief.

Normally, heat accumulates in the Central Valley and is tempered by cool marine air pouring through the Golden Gate, into the Delta, and up the Sacramento and San Joaquin valleys.

But in the current situation, Newmerzhycky said, the heat is draining from the two valleys toward the Golden Gate, converging in the Delta.

He said warmer-than-usual ocean temperatures seem to be preventing normal coastal upwelling, the mechanism that pushes cold offshore water toward the coast and creates the fog that is the state's natural summer air conditioner.

The mercury hit at least 105 degrees Saturday at Chili Bar, the put-in for a popular whitewater run on the American River west of Placerville (El Dorado County).

"Only way to beat it is to get in the water," said Kevin Semonsen, an employee at the store. "We've seen it this hot before, but I don't remember it just coming and coming like this, day after day."

Even San Francisco's relatively moderate temperatures were excessive for many residents.

"I don't like it at all," said Michelle Morales, a lifelong city resident who looked visibly discomfited by the heat as she walked to the Metreon theater complex on Mission Street.

"That's why we're going to the movies," said Morales' friend Jenna Laubscher. "It's air-conditioned."

As California sizzled in the record heat wave, state regulators declared a Stage 1 power emergency, urging all residents to cut back on their electricity consumption to avoid potential blackouts.

Gregg Fishman, a spokesman for the California Independent System Operator, a nonprofit corporation that manages the state's wholesale power grid, said the situation was exacerbated Saturday by the failure of a 750-megawatt power plant.

Heat, of course, is driving the unprecedented demand for power as Californians desperately try to cool off.

Temperatures are expected to stay in the triple digits today, and Monday could also be scorching.

In order to curb pollution trapped by the hot, stagnant air, the Bay Area Air Quality Management District declared Saturday and today Spare the Air Days, the seventh and eighth of 2006. Although public transit will not be free today, residents are encouraged to avoid driving. The district also asked residents to cut back on activities that involve internal combustion engines.

Fishman said an extended heat wave will only increase the demand for power.

"The problem is that you have this residual heat that is retained in the buildings and pavement, so you begin each day with an earlier start point for power demand," he said.

If the situation worsens, the state can move beyond its Stage 1 power emergency to Stage 2 or Stage 3 declarations.

Stage 2 involves interrupting supplies to some large, commercial customers in exchange for lower rates later. Stage 3 may result in rolling blackouts.

Saving power

Consumers can pursue several strategies to conserve power:

- Set the thermostats on air conditioners to 78 degrees or higher.
- Only wash clothes or do other chores that involve appliances after 6:00 p.m.
- Refrain from using electronic devices such as computers and televisions until evening.

No free rides, but Spare the Air anyway

LA's mayor wants to try it for a week

by Erik Nelson

Tri-Valley Herald, Saturday, July 22, 2006

Predicted record high temperatures over the weekend prompted Bay Area smog authorities to declare Saturday a Spare the Air Day, but this time, there won't be any free transit rides.

A weekend day has never been covered by the \$13.6 million free smog-day transit program. And Friday was the last of six days with money available to reimburse subway, bus and ferry operators.

Meanwhile, the mayor of Los Angeles, inspired by the apparent success of Spare the Air in the Bay Area, has asked that city's transit agency to consider giving Angelenos a free-transit week each summer.

Saturday's Bay Area forecast is for "dangerously hot weather" over the weekend. It will be especially hot in the inland valleys, where temperatures are expected to reach 105. The heat, along with low winds and high pressure conspires to create ozone out of car exhaust and other pollutants.

By declaring the summer's seventh Spare the Air Day, Bay Area Air Quality Management District officials hope that residents won't help smog develop by driving their cars or releasing other toxic smog ingredients.

"If you're planning to stain your deck tomorrow, please put it off," implored Luna Salaver, spokeswoman for the air district. "Staining and painting, using lighter fluid or aerosol cans, all of those contain volatile organic chemicals, which evaporate quickly and combine with automobile exhaust to create ground-level ozone in the presence of sunlight and heat."

Such consumer products, which also include cleaning chemicals, "are responsible for 47 tons of air pollutants every summer day in the Bay Area," Salaver added.

The summer has already proven to be particularly smoggy, thanks in large part to the hot weather. As of Thursday, monitoring stations

showed ozone above the federal standard on seven days, starting with June 21, which was also not declared a Spare the Air Day.

On Thursday, the air was, in fact, spared excessive ozone levels, although it will be difficult to determine whether that was due to people heeding the anti-smog program or better-than-expected atmospheric conditions.

There was little doubt that Bay Area commuters used the apparent final day of free transit rides. BART officials estimated a 6 percent increase in Friday's ridership, based on morning head counts. Other transit agencies have seen consistent increases in their ridership on free Spare the Air Days, with ferry services seeing passengers increase several-fold over normal paid days.

In Los Angeles, Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa cited the Bay Area's Spare the Air program as a model for a free-transit offering in his city.

In a letter to the L.A.-area Metropolitan Transportation Agency's chief executive officer, Villaraigosa proposed a week of free bus, subway and light rail service, said mayoral aide Darryl Ryan. The program would be aimed at reducing smog as well as cutting congestion.

"He wants to kind of work together to change the way people move throughout the region," Ryan said. "A lot of people are really reluctant to get out of their cars. You have people getting into their cars to go a block away to get groceries."

Scientists Group Fears More Pollution

By John Heilprin, Associated Press Writer

In the S.F. Chronicle and Washington Post, Friday, July 21, 2006

WASHINGTON, (AP) -- Bush administration plans to ease clean air rules for thousands of aging industrial plants might increase air pollution, the National Academy of Sciences said Friday.

Those Clean Air Act rules are under review by the Supreme Court, which is due to receive legal briefs on the administration's attempts to rewrite the rules in 2002 and 2003.

An NAS report requested by Congress said the possibility of emissions of nitrogen oxides and sulfur dioxide "increases in some locations and decreases in others. However, the magnitude of the changes and the number of geographic areas affected could not be assessed."

Those chemicals contribute to smog, acid rain, soot and other fine particles that lodge in people's lungs and cause asthma and other respiratory ailments.

The academy also implicitly criticized the Environmental Protection Agency's information gathering, saying "a lack of data and the limitations of current models" prevent anyone from drawing firm conclusions about how the rules might affect air pollution.

The EPA took a different view. Bill Wehrum, EPA's acting chief of its Office of Air and Radiation, said the report "confirms that the Bush administration's approach to reducing air pollution guarantees results" by allowing more companies to use a marketplace approach that features an emissions-trading plan.

Under a trading system - which has been promoted in the EPA's Clean Air Interstate Rule - plants unable to meet the required reductions could buy emission allowances from plants that have exceeded the required reductions.

EPA has said that approach would encourage more technology advances; environmentalists said they would compromise public health.

Under the Clean Air Act's "new source review" program - including the Bush administration's changes that Congress asked the academy to study - companies must first get a permit and possibly install anti-pollution controls before building or expanding facilities that could significantly foul the air.

For almost 30 years, the program has been viewed by proponents and opponents alike as too bureaucratic and complex. In 1999, President Clinton used it to sue owners of 51 coal-burning power plants. The Bush administration continued those cases, but rewrote the rules.

Some of the administration's 2002 changes were struck down by a federal court last year; the rest went into effect only in a few states. The 2003 revisions, affecting replaced equipment, was struck down by a court two years ago.

One case, involving Duke Energy Corp., based in Charlotte, N.C., is now before the Supreme Court. The 4th Circuit Court of Appeals in Richmond, Va., ruled last year that power plants can spew more pollutants into the air when they modernize to operate for longer hours.

Scott Segal, director of the Electric Reliability Coordinating Council, representing power companies, said he viewed the report as "unqualified good news" because it shows more companies should be allowed to trade emission allowances.

The NAS advises the government on scientific and technological issues.

Bush Pollution Curbs Are Rated Equal to Clinton's Science Panel Says Proposed Cap-and-Trade System Will Help Clean Air

By Juliet Eilperin, Washington Post Staff Writer
Washington Post, Saturday, July 22, 2006

The Bush administration's new program to cut harmful pollutants from utilities through a cap-and-trade system will do nearly as much to clean the nation's air as the Clinton administration's effort to make aging power plants install pollution controls when they modernize or expand, a report by an independent scientific panel has concluded.

The report from the National Academy of Sciences, released yesterday, represents the latest effort to assess how best to reduce air pollution estimated to cause as many as 24,000 premature deaths each year. The panel concluded that an earlier Bush plan would have allowed pollution to increase over a dozen years, but it found that the administration's more recent Clean Air Interstate Rule (CAIR) -- which targets emissions from power plants in 22 states and the District of Columbia -- would help clean the air over the next two decades.

The CAIR approach aims to reduce nitrogen oxide and sulfur dioxide emissions by 70 percent by 2025 at the latest, according to the Environmental Protection Agency, through a system that would allow utilities to sell and buy pollution credits as long as industry emissions as a whole stayed below a pre-set cap. The Clinton administration had focused on cutting emissions under the 1970 Clean Air Act through a program called New Source Review (NSR), now discarded, which required aging plants to install new, cleaner technology every time they upgraded facilities.

The Bush administration initially proposed changes to New Source Review that would have allowed power companies to modify their plants by as much as 20 percent of their value without installing new controls, a policy the scientific panel said "would be expected to cause an increase" in both sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxide that would have been "possibly substantial."

That plan has largely been struck down by the courts, however, so the scientific panel instead looked at the cap-and-trade rule the administration adopted this spring.

The academy committee's chairman, Charles F. Stevens, a molecular neurobiology professor at the Salk Institute for Biological Studies in La Jolla, Calif., said that while the rule would help reduce pollution, "you can't conclude" it would be as uniformly effective as Clinton's approach, because some communities might face serious pollution from aging power plants that chose to buy credits rather than install advanced emission controls.

The report also noted that "because of a lack of data and the limitations of current [computer] models," the panel had difficulty predicting the impact of the program on emissions, public health and energy efficiency.

Using an assumption that federal officials would have been able to force 7.5 percent of aging power plants to clean up their operations each year if they had continued with Clinton's approach, Stevens added, NSR would have done as much to clean the air as the cap-and-trade system.

William L. Wehrum, EPA's acting assistant administrator for air and radiation, said that was an "implausible" assumption and added that NSR would only have achieved the same result as the Bush administration's strategy if 98 percent of all power plants complied over the next 20 years.

"Any reasonable projection of what NSR is going to accomplish won't come close to what CAIR is going to accomplish," Wehrum said in an interview. The Bush plan "gets significant reductions across the power sector but places greater emphasis on controlling the biggest emitters, which are the places we care about most."

Scott Segal, a utilities lobbyist, concurred that the report proved "cap-and-trade programs are really what reduce emissions."

But John Walke, who directs the clean air program at the Natural Resources Defense Council, an advocacy group, said the study shows the administration has not adopted sufficiently aggressive curbs on pollution.

"This report shows that strong Clean Air Act enforcement with a robust cap-and-trade program will better protect the public from power plant pollution than the Bush administration's path of nonenforcement and weak pollution trading that drags out twenty years," Walke said, adding the administration was offering a "reckless misinterpretation" of the report's conclusions.

[Modesto Bee Editorial, Sun., July 23, 2006:](#)

Slow-growth initiative belongs on fall ballot

This spring, 16,000 people signed petitions to put a proposal on the ballot to restrict residential growth to incorporated cities within Stanislaus County. Petition backers were aiming for the Nov. 7 election.

Now, the county's chief attorney suggests a timeline that would force residents to wait two years before they can vote on the proposal.

That's ridiculous. This initiative appears to have flaws - we're not commenting on its merits - but the public deserves a chance to debate and vote on it within a reasonable time.

Some background

Local residents have been voting on slow-growth measures for years. Modesto's advisory votes on sewer-trunk extensions date to the 1970s. In 1992, Stanislaus County voters rejected a proposed 20-year limit on development outside city planning boundaries. In 2002, county supervisors refused to put a measure on the ballot to direct residential growth inside city limits. The Modesto City Council, however, put a similarly worded advisory measure on its ballot and it passed handily.

This year's proposal would impose restrictions for 30 years. It would require supervisors to conduct a public vote before rezoning land from agricultural or open-space use to residential. The requirement would not apply to cities.

Proponents cite familiar arguments: protecting farmland and the local ag economy; reducing the negative impacts of sprawl, especially air pollution and traffic congestion; and giving residents a direct say over growth.

Opponents say the proposal will take away the rights of property owners, that ballot-box planning does more harm than good and that the initiative addresses only housing, not other types of growth.

A key factor in the debate will be how much growth is occurring outside the city limit. County officials contend that they allow very few homes to be built outside cities. That's true, but county leaders cannot escape the glaring example of Salida, an unincorporated community they permitted to balloon to 14,000 residents in the 1980s and '90s. What's more, there are proposals pending to add 5,000 homes in Salida. Some argue that with the growth, Salida would have the tax base to incorporate as a city, meeting the goal of growth occurring within cities. Opponents suggest - unrealistically, we believe - that Salida should incorporate before growing.

Ironically, Salida isn't mentioned in this year's initiative, but many believe it is at the heart of the debate.

Dates and deadlines

The county attorney contends that staff does not have time before Aug. 11, the state deadline to put measures on the November ballot, to evaluate thoroughly the impact of this year's initiative. By law, the county has 30 days for such an evaluation, and County Counsel Mick Krausnick says the report could be ready for the board's scheduled meeting on Aug. 15. But if the board waits until then, the initiative can't be on the ballot until the next countywide election - June 2008.

Krausnick contends that initiative backers should have turned in their petitions a few weeks earlier, as they did back in 1992.

Proponents note that the county clerk certified the initiative as qualifying for the ballot on July 10 and the board could have considered it the next day. Instead, it wasn't on their agenda until July 18.

The evaluation is needed, but we don't see why staff can't speed it up by a few days. Then the board can schedule a special meeting the week of Aug. 8 and put the initiative on the ballot.

Polls show that county residents rank growth as their No. 1 concern. If the supervisors use a four-day discrepancy to postpone a vote by the public until 2008, they only will fuel the perception that they don't care how residents feel about growth and its ramifications.

Voters had the wisdom to elect these supervisors. Now, the supervisors should trust the voters to make a good decision on the 30-year growth restriction. It belongs on the fall ballot.

The Board of Supervisors meets at 9 a.m. Tuesday in the basement of Tenth Street Place, 1010 10th St.

[Tri-Valley Herald, Editorial, Monday, July 24, 2006](#)

Regulars complain about free transit

TO start with, free transit is good, smog or no smog.

At least that's what nearly everyone I've talked about it believes.

Secondly, free things are often taken for granted.

Think of the panhandler on the street who sneers when your donation doesn't meet with his expectations.

With those points established, it's time for the kvetching.

Complaining, that is, about Spare the Air Days' unprecedented run of free transit, six days, starting with June 23 and ending Friday, unless the Metropolitan Transportation Commission and the Bay Area Air Quality Management District can scrape together a few more millions to cover any other bad air patches we might hit between now and Oct. 13.

What's to complain about, you ask?

-Monthly pass holders still pay. A colleague just came up to me and noted that "people who are on monthly passes are (Let's just say, "cheated"). My girlfriend has a monthly pass on Muni and she said she doesn't get anything out of this."

-Commuter crush. One Bart Rage (www.bartrage.com) poster had this lament: "I usually really like Spare the Air days, cuz I save a couple bucks on BART. Mondays, however, was extremely unpleasant. Since everyone wants a free ride, at 5 p.m. when all the commuters were getting off work (myself included), the 12th Street Oakland BART station was jam-packed. There were at least double, if not triple the number of people down there than normally would be. When the Fremont train arrived, it too was jam-packed. We all tried to get on the train, and the operator closed the doors on us!

-Its expensive. At more than \$2 million a day, the six budgeted (three of them technically yet-to-be approved) Spare the Air free-transit days add up. The tally is now at \$13.6 million, give or take. Some have suggested that the money might be better spent improving transportation.

-It attracts ner-do-wells, the de-institutionalized and freeloading tourists to transit.

-Its value is not proven. This is perhaps the strongest argument that Spare the Air is a big waste of money. So far, no one has been able to demonstrate that free fares + more riders = fewer cars and less smog. Its an eminently logical assumption, but some are calling for empirical evidence.

Most of these complaints are annoyances that detract from the secondary purpose of encouraging people to use transit even when they have to pay. An air district official responded, paradoxically, that if commuters dont like some of the negatives of free transit, they should try transit that isnt free.

But the cost-benefit question is a big one with no adequate answer. The bottom line is that denizens of the Bay Area have to believe that more transit use and less driving is better, and thats not such a difficult pitch to make.

And the monthly pass question may be discouraging for those of us who are already blue-ribbon campers, but its not as if were going to start driving again in protest. And the money you save on a monthly pass is probably more (unless youre an AC Transit pass holder and you have my sympathies) than you would have saved by getting three free days in June and three more in July.

Oh, Canada! Youve let yourself go

Ahh, Canada. Its where all right-thinking (er, make that left-thinking) Americans would be living if there were no Bay Area.

Ive not spent much time there, but I remember going to visit the Canadian side of Niagara Falls, and, as if on cue, I witnessed a well-dressed woman with a little dog being told by a police officer that shed better clean up after her pet, or else. It could have been in the script of Canadian Bacon.

But alas, my stereotype has blown a speaker.

I just read that the Toronto Transit Commission is waiting for a cold day in hell before it will offer free rides to mitigate the summers 20th smog day even as American cities embrace the idea.

American cities? Read The Bay Area in this Toronto Star story:

Public transit in most American cities, including San Francisco, receive much more state and federal funding than the TTC ...

The San Francisco areas Metropolitan Transportation Commission - which oversees 25 public transit systems - has about \$12 million (U.S.) in its coffers to cover expenses related to offering free rides during smog days in sweltering heat ...

"We need to have a similar approach in Canada. When the provincial and federal government step up to the plate, well be happy to participate with them and provide free transit. Without their help, its really not in the game plan," said the citys transit chief.

So there you have it. Were more progressive than Canada, or at least richer.

[Tracy Press, Editorial, Monday, July 24, 2006:](#)

Tracy scorcher deserves a searing barb

BOUQUET: To the 10 and under All-American Sports Academy girls softball traveling team for going undefeated in 40 tournament games this season en route to the national championship. The final tournament will be July 31 through Aug. 6 in Moline, Ill.

BARB: To the Metropolitan Transportation Commission for punishing the people who spare the air every day, not just on the designated "spare-the-air" days. Transit systems with monthly passes like Altamont Commuter Express did not monetarily reward these long-term riders while letting new passengers on for free.

BOUQUET: To House Resources Committee Chairman Richard Pombo, R-Tracy, for maneuvering compromise legislation through his committee that would add wilderness protection to more than 275,000 acres of federal land along California's North Coast. The measure's author, Mike Thompson, D-St. Helena ; Pombo; and California's two Democratic senators, Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer, negotiated the deal. It also designates about 75,000 acres of Bureau of Land Management land in the Cow Mountain area of Mendocino County as a "recreational management area" for off-road vehicles and mountain bikes.

BARB: To President Bush for stopping a Justice Department investigation of anti-terror domestic spying of Americans' international calls and e-mails. Bush did so by refusing to grant security clearances for department investigators who were looking into the role Justice Department lawyers played in developing the program.

BOUQUET: To the Senate for approving on a 63-37 vote a bill that would expand the federal funding of embryonic stem-cell research. President Bush quickly vetoed it, the first veto of his tenure in office.

BOUQUET: To 187 members of the House for barring the passage of a constitutional amendment that bans same-sex marriages. Such amendments are hateful and discriminatory.

BARB: To the University of California Board of Regents for allowing about 60 top executives in the UC system to keep more than \$1 million they received in unauthorized extra compensation. The reason?

"The beneficiaries of this didn't do anything wrong, so they shouldn't be penalized," said Gerald Parsky, chairman of the governing board.

Someone should be punished. How about the regents?

BOUQUET: To Marriott International, the largest American hotel chain, for announcing a ban on smoking in its nearly 400,000 hotel rooms in the U.S. and Canada. Hotels are discovering that less than 5 percent of patrons request smoking rooms while complaints about tobacco odor have increased.

[L.A. Times commentary, Sunday, July 23, 2006:](#)

California's dust bowl

Left in the Dust How Race and Politics Created a Human and Environmental Tragedy in L.A. Karen Piper Palgrave Macmillan: 224 pp., \$24.95

By Marjorie Gellhorn Sa'adah. Marjorie Gellhorn Sa'adah is a writer in Los Angeles.

PARTICULATE matter 10, or PM-10, is dust. It is sometimes called "respirable particulate matter," indicating that it is fine enough to be inhaled. "You breathe this dust in, but you don't breathe it out," writes Karen Piper, in "Left in the Dust: How Race and Politics Created a Human and Environmental Tragedy in L.A."

Piper is a native of Ridgecrest, Calif., the first city downwind of Owens Lake, a 110-square-mile dry lake covered in PM-10; she likens it to "a giant bowl of fresh talcum powder." As a child, she saw dust clouds that "hung in the air like fog" and days when "the sun disappeared and it was hard to breathe."

Like asbestos, PM-10 infiltrates lung tissue, causing and exacerbating respiratory illnesses and autoimmune reactions. PM-10 is also called fugitive dust, a name that implies it has outwitted human efforts to contain it.

Construction, industry, agriculture and cars' tailpipes all create, stir up or emit PM-10. Because of the significant adverse health and environmental effects, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency sets air

quality standards for acceptable levels of PM-10, and the state Health and Safety Code sets the laws governing its prevention and mitigation. Developers grading the landscape to make way for tract homes and industrial parks must have a water truck spraying down the dust behind every piece of equipment that scrapes at the earth. When the Santa Ana winds kick up, a man on the nightshift at Santa Anita Park circles and circles the dirt racetrack with a water truck.

What settles dust is the weight of water. The Owens Lake dust once was covered in brine, populated by tule grass and salt shrimp and traversed by steamboats. When the Los Angeles Aqueduct began diverting the lake's water in 1913, arsenic, cadmium, nickel and other naturally occurring toxic metals were left concentrated in the dry dirt. The Sierra Nevada range that borders the valley acts as a funnel: Wind lifts the dust and carries it in ominous opaque clouds, south through the Owens Valley, through Piper's hometown, across the high desert and toward Los Angeles.

The dry Owens Lake is the largest source of PM-10 pollution in the United States, according to the Great Basin Unified Air Pollution Control District, the air quality district for three High Sierra counties. To see the dry lake for yourself, you could take Highway 395 north from Los Angeles County, along the eastern side of the Sierras. Or you could follow the 223-mile-long aqueduct, but that would be trespassing - the land around it is owned by Los Angeles' Department of Water and Power.

At the top of the aqueduct, "a simple concrete barrier ... funnels the [Owens] river into the aqueduct channel." Without its source water, the lake went completely dry. When the DWP began pumping additional groundwater, lowering the water table below the roots of trees, the land went barren. Not until 1987 did the EPA mandate that the DWP clean up the resulting dust for air quality violations that were "twenty-six times the federal standards set by the Clean Air Act."

In an interview at DWP's Los Angeles headquarters, Piper introduces herself only as a professor from the University of Missouri. She doesn't tell the DWP executive that she "took an interest in Owens Lake because of eighteen years' worth of dust embedded in my lungs." She stifles her cough - she has another bout of pneumonia - and when the executive tells her, "The only thing worse than the DWP in the Owens Valley would be no DWP," she coaches herself to smile "the way a perfectly healthy woman should smile."

But science considers one woman with a cough to be an anecdote. Although the risks of particulate air pollution have been documented in the scientific literature, there are no epidemiological health studies and no statistics on how many Owens Valley residents have become ill or died because of the dust. After the U.S. Navy, whose pilots couldn't see to land their planes, and area residents grew more vocal, studies were done - but on the feasibility of ameliorating the dust, not the dust's health effects. Even these studies, Piper writes, were the result of hard-fought state legislation requiring Los Angeles "to undertake reasonable measures ... to mitigate the air quality impacts of its activities in the production, diversion, storage, or conveyance of water."

The city of Los Angeles' mitigation effort from 1987 to 1996 was to fund the Great Basin district to study the effectiveness of "planting saltgrass, spraying chemicals on the surface of the lake, layering it with tires, building fences to stop the sand, and tilling the surface of the lake." The district tried digging wells to cover it with ground water. District officials considered gravel blankets. When the district determined that the only feasible solution was to return water to Owens Lake, the DWP "cut off the salaries of the members of the Great Basin APCD."

Piper adds dust to the long history of DWP's real and imagined foes - farmers who dynamited the aqueduct as their livelihood flowed south, striking aqueduct builders and DWP employees, Paiute tribes that refused to leave their land, Owens Valley activists, as well as potential terrorists the DWP patrols against today. (At the aqueduct's head, she met a DWP employee armed with a shotgun and a growling Rottweiler.) "Dust," she writes, "is the new financial drain and saboteur."

Beyond the eco-thriller aspects of this book, Piper is exploring something far more complicated than a villain and victim, a city's thirst, a valley's dust; she is using the water to ask questions about the notion of development and American assumptions about progress toward the public good.

In her previous book, "Cartographic Fictions: Maps, Race, and Identity," Piper considered cartography from the perspective of people at the margins of maps; she continues this method of inquiry in "Left in the

Dust," examining native Paiutes, Japanese and Japanese American World War II internees at nearby Manzanar, destitute people on Los Angeles' skid row whose access to potable water is curtailed, and others who bear the history of Los Angeles' development as toxicity in their bodies.

Piper also sets the aqueduct's history in the context of American "empire building," citing the unilateral use of presidential powers (by Theodore Roosevelt, which led to the aqueduct's approval) that gave private interests great gain from public expenditures to provide water to Los Angeles. All of this has strong echoes for the foot soldiers and bill payers of today's American empire.

In 2001, for the first time since farmers dynamited the aqueduct in 1927, water flowed into the Owens Valley. The DWP diverted some of the water to create a shallow 12-square-mile lake. "Owens Lake," Piper writes, "is now a living experiment in what returning water will do to a decimated ecosystem. It is also an experiment in what losing water will do to Los Angeles."

We all get our water from someone, somewhere. Tap-turning Americans would do well to give this history a close read.

[S.F. Chronicle editorial, Friday, July 21, 2006:](#)

Spare the air, spur economy

MANY BAY AREA residents have spent the last few days jostling for free rides on BART and the ferries, which led us to wonder where everyone was going on Spare the Air Day. The answer became clear during an early-afternoon stroll in downtown San Francisco Thursday: They're going everywhere but work.

Seriously. We saw them. Way too many of them -- lounging on every inch of green in Union Square, thinning the racks at H&M, cramming into every shop that sells soft-serve ice cream.

Many of them were carrying large bottles of water and tangles of electronic equipment, but many of them weren't. Nearly all of them, however, seemed to be clutching shopping bags. Hmm.

They have earned some humorless weekday commuters' ire for the enthusiasm with which they've been packing trains, buses and ferries for the past few days. BART estimates that midday "leisure" travel shoots up 75 percent on free-ride days. This leads us to two conclusions as we approach the summer's Spare the Air finale today:

-- The Bay Area Air Quality Management District ought to partner with local chambers of commerce to declare "Spare the Air, Save the Economy" days, and;

-- It's time for local governments to consider the idea that subsidizing public transit, especially in off-peak hours, pays off in other ways.

Few local business organizations have studied economic fluctuations during Spare the Air days, but we've heard a great deal of anecdotal evidence about the impact of free rides on business traffic.

Karen Bell of the Fisherman's Wharf community told us that her neighborhood's businesses have definitely seen an uptick this week -- and a lot of the foot traffic is local. Market Street was unusually thick with shoppers Thursday.

All of this bodes well for employers, job seekers and local government tax receipts. Spare the Air days are proving that offering good public transportation -- quick, cheap, easy to navigate -- creates benefits that we can't afford to spare.

[L.A. Times editorial, Monday, July 24, 2006:](#)

Global Warming on Trial

The Supreme Court is right to weigh in on the globe's hottest issue.

IN AN UNUSUAL BUT WELCOME intervention, the U.S. Supreme Court has decided to wade into the global warming debate. In its next term, the court will hear a lawsuit brought by California and other states against the federal government for failing to reduce carbon dioxide emissions. Courts usually defer to the

discretion of administrative agencies to implement the law, but in this case such deference is outweighed by the administration's glaring dereliction of duty.

At issue is whether the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has the authority under federal law to regulate carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases. The EPA says it does not - and that, by extension, neither does California, which is uniquely empowered by federal law to fight air pollution. Recent legislation to push the administration toward specific action has been stymied by Republicans in Congress. But the Clean Air Act, passed in 1970, charges the government with regulating substances that "may reasonably be anticipated to endanger public health or welfare," and it specifically includes those that might affect the "weather" or "climate."

The wording is pretty straightforward, but the case hinges on tricky questions of whether science has clearly proved that carbon dioxide from human activity contributes to climate change and whether that climate change endangers public welfare.

Credible research has piled up in recent years -- produced by noted scientific institutions and sometimes the Bush administration's own climatologists -- linking climate change to rapidly accelerating Arctic ice melt, fiercer hurricanes and, most recently, Western wildfires. Many of these studies have fingered human activity as a substantial contributor to the warming trend. Even though President Bush promised six years ago to reduce greenhouse gases, his main response since has been to call for more study on climate change.

The court generally, and wisely, declines to wade into and resolve scientific or bureaucratic debates. But there is national and international need for clarity on this issue.

What's not clear, of course, is how the court will rule. But even a decision essentially allowing the EPA to ignore global warming could shame Congress into passing clarifying legislation. And there's always the chance that the court will acknowledge, as one administration official did a year ago, that "the surface of the Earth is warmer and that an increase in greenhouse gases caused by humans is contributing to the problem." That official, by the way, is not a climatologist. He's the president.

[Letter to the Fresno Bee, Sunday, July 23, 2006:](#)

Drive-through damage

I would like to know who makes the rules for Spare the Air days. I recently saw on the news that the next day would be a Spare the Air day, so we should drive only if necessary, not mow our lawns, not blow leaves and conserve energy by not running our air conditioners, even though the temperature will be more than 100 degrees.

Do these people ever get out and see the lines of cars, trucks and SUVs waiting in the drive-through windows for coffee, burgers and so forth? I can only imagine the pollution in the air from all these vehicles.

The same goes for the winter, when we have smoke from our fireplaces as a real target for the pollution patrol, but the lines at the drive-throughs are still just as long.

Please, someone explain this to me.

R.A. Fowler, Sanger

[Tri-Valley Herald, Letter to the Editor, Monday, July 24, 2006:](#)

Spare that air

SO FAR this summer, the Bay Area Air Quality Management District has issued an unprecedented six "Spare the Air" days as a result of elevated smog levels. Many Bay Area residents have done their share of reducing the level of smog by using public transportation during these days. This is critically important to help make breathing easier for the tens of thousands of people who are vulnerable to elevated smog levels during hot summer days, especially people with asthma. In the Bay Area alone, close to half a million men, women, and children are affected by this lung disease.

Everyone in the community can help reduce air pollution by finding alternatives to smog-producing, gas-powered vehicles. We can switch to low- or zero-emission vehicles, ride our bikes or walk, carpool, and take mass transit as often as possible, especially on "Spare the Air" days when air pollution reaches critical levels.

Air pollution is a public health issue, and we can all do our part to reduce it. For more information, go to <http://www.californialung.org>.

Karen Fulton Holine, American Lung Association of California, Emeryville

[Modesto Bee, Letter to the Editor, Monday, July 24, 2006](#)

Don't ignore safety of pedestrians

To all who drive in Modesto: Please remember that pedestrians have the right of way. If a pedestrian is in a crosswalk or waiting to cross a street, your car must not enter the crosswalk until that pedestrian is safely on the sidewalk. It is not OK to whip a left-hand turn three feet in front of a pedestrian crossing an intersection, and it is not OK to make a right turn on a green light in front of a pedestrian who is stepping off the curb. If you are driving on a four-lane road and a car in front of you or to the right stops, don't blindly shoot around on the left. Take a moment to look and see if that car is stopping for a pedestrian.

I frequently walk with my 2-year-old son in his stroller. At least once during each trip, I have to take evasive measures to ensure our safety while legally crossing a street. Is it really worth endangering someone's life to save five seconds?

Pedestrians are helping to keep gas prices low and improve the valley's air quality by choosing to walk instead of drive.

ERICA TREAT, Modesto

Spanish clips:

The following clip discusses Riverside's poor air quality. The World Health Organization estimates the region has one of the worst small particle air pollution problem in the world, behind Jakarta (Indonesia), Calcutta (India) and Bangkok (Thailand). If you need more information contact Maricela at ext. 5849.

Riverside a merced de la contaminación

La polución del aire en el condado alcanza un nivel record

Alejandro Cano

La Opinión Digital, lunes, 24 de julio de 2006

RIVERSIDE.- El exceso de residuos de procesos industriales en el aire es indetectable por las defensas naturales del cuerpo humano, pero causa severos problemas de salud para todo individuo expuesto a ellas por largos períodos de tiempo.

Es uno de los tipos de contaminación más letales y, según recientes estadísticas, más de 96 millones de estadounidenses están expuestos a sus devastadores efectos.

Los residentes del condado de Riverside son parte de ese grupo y según informa la Asociación Americana del Pulmón, son los más afectados en California ya que la región cuenta con el aire más contaminado con partículas finas en la nación.

El reporte refleja lo revelado por la Organización Mundial de la Salud (OMS), la cual colocó a Riverside entre las cuatro regiones más contaminadas en el mundo, sólo detrás de Yakarta (Indonesia), Calcuta (India) y Bangkok (Tailandia).

Problemas cardiovasculares, asma, ataques al corazón, cáncer del pulmón, incluso muerte prematura, han sido relacionados con el exceso de partículas finas en el aire, causado por los desechos de plantas de energía y motores que utilizan carbón y diesel como combustión, respectivamente.

Ante el peligro que representa, el Centro de Acción Comunitaria y Justicia Ambiental (CCA EJ) lanzó una campaña para alertar a la población sobre los niveles de contaminación y exigió a las autoridades locales tomar cartas en el asunto.

Penny Newman, directora ejecutiva de CCAEJ, dijo que las autoridades han ignorado las necesidades de los residentes de Riverside y continúan aprobando proyectos de construcción en áreas aledañas a zonas residenciales, lo que pone en peligro la salud de miles de residentes.

"Las autoridades saben que si colocan bodegas u otro tipo de comercio en zonas residenciales, el riesgo de contraer cualquier enfermedad relacionada con la contaminación es mayor. Si saben eso, entonces, ¿por qué continúan aprobando proyectos que demuestran lo contrario?", dijo Newman. "Simple, porque les deja dinero. Los líderes que tenemos prefieren ver dinero que una población saludable".

Los efectos de las partículas finas en el aire de la región de Riverside han ocasionado que los residentes de menor edad experimenten problemas en el crecimiento y capacidad pulmonar con mayor frecuencia en comparación con otros niños en California, según informa American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine.

Para evitar más daños, CCAEJ planifica detener los planes de construcción de bodegas en zonas aledañas a comunidades y escuelas, los cuales al presente se encuentran en revisión por la Junta del Condado.

Según datos oficiales, las autoridades evalúan un proyecto que, de ser aprobado, permitiría la construcción de seis bodegas en el área de Mira Loma Village, comunidad compuesta de por lo menos cien familias, en su mayoría latinas.

"En un estudio que hicimos encontramos que más de siete mil camiones transitan por día la avenida que colinda con las casas", dijo Newman. "La mayoría de esos camiones viene de los puertos de Los Ángeles y Long Beach. Creemos que es criminal que el condado permita más contaminación en los alrededores de estas casas".

Otro proyecto que, según Newman, podría poner en riesgo la salud de miles de residentes es el denominado triángulo Bellgrave. Dicho proyecto permitiría la construcción de cientos de viviendas en un área industrial.

"¿Cuál es la diferencia entre construir bodegas en zonas residenciales y casas en zonas industriales? Es lo mismo; el daño será el mismo", dijo Newman. "Hemos pedido que se construyan negocios pequeños que no contaminen, pero se nos ha negado. Ésa es la perspectiva de los líderes, hacer dinero sin medir las consecuencias".

PLAN DE CONTINGENCIA

Bob Buster, presidente de la Junta de Supervisores del condado de Riverside, desmintió las acusaciones y aseguró que hacen todo lo posible para cambiar el código de planificación para que no se permita construir casas en zonas industriales y viceversa.

"Entiendo que tenemos un problema que es causado por la transportación de víveres de los diferentes puertos de California. El problema no es tan fácil de resolver, se requieren nuevas medidas para forzar a las compañías a usar combustible que no cause tanta contaminación", dijo Buster. Moira Chapin, de California Environment, se expresó de acuerdo con Buster.

Agregó que si las autoridades no reducen los niveles de partículas finas en el aire, muy pronto los residentes estarían expuestos a enfermedades crónicas que podrían convertirse en letales. "La situación es seria pero parece que al gobierno no le interesa solucionarla. Cada vez estamos teniendo más casos de asma y enfermedades respiratorias entre la población de menor edad y envejecientes. Sin embargo, no hay respuesta", dijo Chapin. "Si los niveles [de contaminación] se mantienen elevados la gente sufrirá daños más severos, incluso tal vez irreversibles". Datos del Departamento de Asma en la Niñez del condado de Riverside revelan que en 2001 hubo más de 173 mil personas afectadas por el asma o el equivalente a más de ocho millones de dólares en gastos de tratamiento. A nivel de la nación, el número de muertes ocasionadas por ataques de asma en personas adultas se elevó de 2,750 en 1995 a más de 5,550 en 2005, mientras que el número de muertes de niños se cuadruplicó en el mismo período de tiempo. Una propuesta solución al problema es obligar por ley a las compañías a limpiar el medio ambiente que contaminan, lo que le podría costar millones de dólares, según Chapin. Sin embargo, la Administración Bush no ha mostrado interés en "molestar" a las grandes empresas, agregó. "Todo se reduce a mantener el status quo. [El presidente George W.] Bush sabe del peligro, sin embargo, no

ordena nuevas medidas", dijo Chapin. "Ésta tal vez sea la mejor decisión que tome Bush, pero hasta el momento ha decidido apoyar a los contaminadores en vez de a la población". Mientras tanto, la población continúa sufriendo los estragos de la contaminación ambiental. Según datos del Departamento de Control de Enfermedades del condado de Riverside, las visitas al hospital ocasionadas por ataques de asma van en aumento. En 1996, unas 1,502 personas fueron hospitalizadas por ataques de asma mientras que en 2003 el número se elevó a 1,958. "No podemos decir con exactitud que el exceso de partículas finas en el aire está ocasionando más casos de asma, pero sí sabemos que los casos están aumentando", dijo Wayne Harris, director del Departamento de Epidemiología del condado de Riverside. "Tal vez sea, incluso, por el aumento en población. Cualquiera que sea el caso, es algo que hay que tomar en serio".

The following clip discusses that the railroad companies have promised to reduce emissions in California. If you need more information contact Maricela at ext. 5849.

Empresas ferroviarias se comprometen a reducir contaminación en California

La oficina estatal reconoció ayer a ambas empresas de ferrocarriles por su conciencia ambiental, al comprender prácticamente sin obligación que el sur de California es la región más contaminada en Estados Unidos

Aire Libre, Los Ángeles, Radio Bilingüe, viernes, 21 de julio de 2006

Las dos empresas ferroviarias en el sur de California y la Oficina estatal de Recursos del Aire mantienen un acuerdo con el que los ferrocarriles reducirán en 20 por ciento sus emisiones aunque el convenio carece de oficialidad.

Las compañías permanecen en compromiso de reducir la contaminación en el sur de California, aunque el acuerdo sólo se alcanzó en un memorando de entendimiento hace seis meses, sin confirmación legislativa o de la administración del gobernador Arnold Schwarzenegger.

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The following clip discusses the Independent System Operator's recommendation on abstaining from outdoor activities to care for better lung health. If you need more information contact Maricela at ext. 5849.

Confirman autoridades energéticas índices de insalubridad en el aire por el clima

El sistema informó que puesto que la mejor recomendación para cuidar la salud pulmonar en estas circunstancias es abstenerse de realizar actividades al aire libre, los residentes de California tengan en cuenta que hay un aumento creciente de consumo de energía, y es preferible moderarse en el uso de electricidad

Aire Libre, Los Ángeles, Radio Bilingüe, jueves, 20 de julio de 2006

El Sistema Operador Independiente, la autoridad que regula el consumo de energía en California, confirmó que el aire en términos generales en el estado tiene índices de insalubridad debido al clima que impera esta semana.

De acuerdo con el Sistema, las presiones húmedas atmosféricas y el calor veraniego bajan al combinarse al ozono a nivel de tierra.

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