

District Highlights

March 19 Actions by the Governing Board



- Board member John Telles, MD, presented the results of a recently published study on the impacts of small **particle pollution, known as PM2.5, on life expectancy**. The research compared data from 1978-83 with 1999-00 in 51 metro areas, including four in California, and also adjusted for socio economics, geographic area and lifestyle. The study showed that average life expectancy improved along with reductions in concentrations of PM2.5. Dr. Telles said it was important to note that these statistics represent the lives of real people and that those who benefit the most from reduced exposure to pollution are vulnerable populations with serious health issues.
- The Board approved amendments to **Rule 4902** (Residential Water Heaters). The amendments will require new water heaters sold in the Valley to emit less nitrogen oxides (NOx). The NOx emissions combine with other pollutants to form ozone during the hot, stagnant Valley summers. The new limits will eliminate 75 percent of the current NOx emissions from these heaters.
- The Board approved activities and events to support year two of the **Healthy Air Living** initiative. Healthy Air Living is the District's ongoing outreach initiative designed to further the public health mission by making air quality a priority in daily decision-making. Among the Healthy Air Living events planned for 2009 are: air quality summits in each of the District's three regions; establishing a Healthy Air Partner program with businesses and organizations Valley-wide; implementing a broad range of outreach events and activities oriented toward public participation; and partnering with other organizations throughout the year to support activities such as Bike-to-Work days, commute challenges and energy-efficiency campaigns.
- The Board also approved a contract with Jeffrey Scott Agency (JSA) for comprehensive public outreach and education media campaigns to support Healthy Air Living.
- The Board accepted \$935,900 in revenue for the **Carl Moyer** Air Quality Standards Attainment Program from the Antelope Valley and Mojave Desert air districts. These districts were unable to utilize all of their funds and they will now be used to fund qualifying emission-reduction projects in the Valley. During recent audits of the program, the District was lauded for its efficient use of Carl Moyer funds, and several of its policies and procedures were highlighted as best practices and recommended to other air districts.
- The Governing Board approved changes aimed at increasing participation in the District's **Gross Polluting Vehicle Program**. Under the revised program, more Valley residents will be eligible to receive up to \$5,000 in funding to help buy a newer, cleaner vehicle. To improve program acceptance and name recognition, the name will be changed to Polluting Automobile Scrap and Salvage (PASS), and a new bilingual marketing campaign is being launched.
- Staff presented an overview of planned District efforts to assist local Valley governments in meeting **climate change requirements and greenhouse gas emission targets** mandated by SB375 (Regional Targets for Greenhouse Gases). These include new CEQA requirements and other planning considerations related to climate change. District efforts include providing technical assistance to cities and counties, assisting in mitigating climate-change emissions through voluntary greenhouse gas emission agreements, air-quality guidelines for general plans, Rule 9510 (Indirect Source Review), grant programs and programs to reduce vehicle trips at work sites.
- The Board received and filed a report on the implementation of the 2007 amendments to **Rule 4103** (Open Burning), which prohibited the burning of most material from orchard removals. The District has met all of its commitments with regard to implementing these burning restrictions.

- The Board approved an agreement with Neuton Power Equipment for the annual **Clean Green Yard Machines** lawn mower trade-in program. Based in Vermont, Neuton manufactures the cordless, non-polluting electric lawn mowers that thousands of Valley residents have purchased at a huge discount after turning in their gas-powered mowers. Clean Green Yard Machines is designed to reduce emissions from gas-burning mowers, a significant source of nitrogen oxide and volatile organic compound (VOC) emissions. The District received donations from several partners for this year's effort including PG&E, Merced and Tulare counties, the City of Ceres and Turlock Irrigation District.
- The Board approved a \$30,000 contribution to the San Joaquin Valley Valley-wide Air Pollution Study Agency to conduct field study of **organic waste composting emissions**.
- The Board approved a \$319,000 **air-quality agreement** with GWF Energy to mitigate actual emissions increases from the operation of GWF's proposed combined-cycle power plant in Tracy. GWF plans to modify the existing peak-use plant with better air pollution control equipment and add electrical generation capacity so it can operate full-time. The funds will provide emission reductions near Tracy as much as possible or within the District's Northern Region.

District Activities

Outreach and Education

- Winners in the District's **Kids for Clean Air Contest** for 4th and 5th graders will be announced soon. Valley teachers submitted packets overflowing with pledge forms for a chance to win an iPod Shuffle for each student and a \$250 teacher resource grant. To enter, students got family and friends to pledge to make personal changes for cleaner air, such as never burning trash and linking their vehicle trips. Winning classrooms with the highest average of pledge forms per student will be selected from each county.
- **For Reel Video Contest accepting entries.** Video submissions are due May 15 for the second Healthy Air Living video contest. Thirty-second videos that promote a healthy air lifestyle can be mailed or dropped off at the nearest District office. Student winners will receive an iPod Shuffle and, if the entry comes from a classroom, the teacher is eligible for a \$250 resource grant. Pick up an entry form at www.healthyairliving.org.
- **Outreach and Communications** responded to 11 media calls and 67 public calls and gave two air-quality presentations last month. Media release topics included the Burn Cleaner kick-off and the 2009 For Reel Video Contest.

Grant and Incentive Programs

- The public took advantage of discounts offered through the District's **Burn Cleaner Wood Burning Device Change-out Program**. ERIP processed 274 applications and funded 168, including 32 that were low income, for a total of \$150,000. Incentives of \$750 and \$1,500 to low-income residents were given toward the purchase of a cleaner-burning gas, pellet or certified wood-burning stove or insert.
- The District received 273 incentive program applications in February.
- \$1,223,246.00 in Heavy-Duty Engine Program and REMOVE II Program grant funds were placed under contract last month.
- \$2,462,706.02 was paid out in Heavy-Duty Engine Program claims in February.
 - Ag Engines – 42 \$2,194,315.17
 - Off Road – 1 \$ 53,390.85
 - On-Road 1B – 3 \$ 215,000.00

Heavy-Duty Emission Reductions (tons)

- NOx 290
- PM 14
- ROG 13

Total: 317

- \$108,298.75 in REMOVE II Program claims were paid out in February.

February Operations Overview

- **The District** received 121 environmental documents for review in February.
- **Planning** held nine rule and plan workshops.
- **Compliance** conducted 2,725 inspections in February. 259 NOVs were issued and 302 cases were settled.
- **Permits** received 588 applications and issued 381 permits in February.
- **ERIP** received 50 smoking vehicle reports.

Upcoming Meetings

Governing Board

9 a.m. Thurs., April 16, 2009

Citizens' Advisory Committee

10 a.m. Tues., April 7, 2009

Please see www.valleyair.org for agendas and other details.