

News Release

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For: local news, business,
lifestyle and assignment editors



San Joaquin Valley
AIR POLLUTION CONTROL DISTRICT



North District Media Contact - Modesto

Anthony Presto (209) 557-6400

Central District Media Contact - Fresno

Jaime Holt (559) 230-5850

South District Media Contact - Bakersfield

Brenda Turner (661) 392-5500

Spanish language Media Contact

Claudia Encinas (559) 230-5851

District asks public to cut vehicle trips ***Ozone violations will cost businesses*** ***\$29 million per year***

With the start of the school year, the Air District is asking Valley residents to cut vehicle trips associated with going to work and transporting children to school. Aside from the desire for cleaner air, this year's request by the Air District is also aimed to spare Valley businesses from major monetary fines that will be imposed by the federal government.

2010 is the federal deadline for meeting the 1-hour ozone standard. Failure to meet the standard this year will result in a \$29 million per year penalty imposed on Valley businesses. "We are so close to meeting the standard and, with a little help from the public, we can get there," said Seyed Sadredin, executive director of the Valley Air District.

The Valley has had no violation of the 1-hour ozone standard this year. Last year, the Valley only had four violations and all occurred after the start of the school year. Compared to 1990, when the Valley experienced 50 violations, this reflects a major improvement in air quality. However, under federal law, the \$29 million per year penalty on Valley businesses is triggered if the Valley experiences more than a single violation anywhere in the Valley.

The District's analysis of recent air quality trends indicates a sharp increase in ozone readings with the beginning of the school year. It's a familiar scenario: Vehicles backed up on congested streets in front of neighborhood schools, carrying just one child, driven by just one parent. Although often a necessity – and often a time-saving convenience – these trips are responsible for a quantifiable increase in ozone-forming emissions.

There are ways for Valley residents to help keep ozone under control – most

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significantly, reducing vehicle emissions, which is the largest contributor to the Valley's air pollution. Healthy Air Living is a District public education and outreach initiative aimed at providing individuals and businesses real tools to reduce emissions on a voluntary basis. For additional information, please visit www.healthyairliving.com.

Some Healthy Air Living tips to reduce back-to-school-related vehicle emissions are:

- Carpooling or vanpooling (getting to work, or school);
- Walking your child to school; and
- Not idling your car when dropping off or picking up your child.

"The stakes are high when it comes to cleaning up our air and saving businesses money in these tough economic times. The Valley has proven before that it can come together to make a positive change that benefits all of us. We need to do it now," Sadredin said.

For more information about the Valley Air District, call a regional office: in Fresno, 559-230-6000; in Bakersfield, 661-392-5500; and in Modesto, 209-557-6400.