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Attn: Local news, weather, health and assignment editors

Northern region – Modesto

Anthony Presto (209) 557-6472

Central/Southern regions – Fresno

Heather Heinks (559) 230-5898

Spanish-language contact

Maricela Velasquez (559) 230-5849

Wildfires linger, threatening public health in the Valley

High pressure and wildfire emissions bring potential for PM2.5 and ozone impacts

The Rough Fire burning in Fresno and Tulare Counties and other surrounding wildfires have caused early morning smoke impacts and elevated fine-particulate matter (PM2.5) the past two days prompting air officials to issue a health caution Valley-wide. Continued high pressure, calm winds and strong morning inversions are creating the potential for smoke impacts through Wednesday. In addition to the wildfire emissions (which include ozone precursors), the region's high temperatures and stagnant conditions are increasing the potential for elevated ground level ozone formation across the Valley in the early afternoon and evenings.

PM2.5 and ozone can cause serious health problems including lung disease, asthma attacks and increased risk of heart attacks and stroke. Where conditions warrant, people with heart or lung disease should follow their doctors' advice for dealing with episodes of particulate exposure. Additionally, older adults and children should avoid prolonged exposure or heavy exertion, depending on their local conditions.

People with existing respiratory conditions, young children and elderly people are especially susceptible to health effects from these pollutants. Air District officials urge residents to follow their doctors' orders when exposed to fire emissions and stay indoors if at all possible.

Residents can check the District's wildfire page at www.valleyair.org/wildfires for information about current wildfires and whether they are impacting the Valley. Residents can also check the nearest air monitor to their location to determine localized air-quality conditions for both PM2.5 and ozone. Visit the Real-time Air Advisory Network to subscribe for free: www.valleyair.org/RAAN.

For more information, visit www.valleyair.org or call a District office in Fresno (559-230-6000), Modesto (209-557-6400) or Bakersfield (661-381-1809).