

## **SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY AIR POLLUTION CONTROL DISTRICT MEDIA RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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### ***Popular lawnmower program kicks off this week in north Valley***

In a show of support for clean air, 500 responsive Valley residents are scheduled this weekend to swap their polluting, gasoline-powered lawnmowers for a 50 percent discount toward electric mowers. They are retiring their old mowers through the Clean Green Yard Machines program and investing in top-of-the-line cordless, rechargeable models. Saturday's event is the first of three that the Valley Air District will sponsor this year and will be held from 7a.m. to 4 p.m. at Home Depot, located at 5010 Feather River Drive in Stockton. Additional events are scheduled for April 20 in Merced and April 27 in Visalia.

The 2002 Clean Green Yard Machines program will help residents Valley-wide retire a total of 1,200 gas mowers, reducing pollution by an estimated 1.66 tons of smog-forming emissions this summer. Over the lifetime of the mowers, the cumulative reductions will equal 11.62 tons of unhealthy air contaminants.

Residents were required to reserve the battery-powered mowers in advance by submitting applications that were accepted on a first-come, first-served basis.

"The District opened the reservations in early March and the public responded immediately," said Charlie Goldberg, program coordinator for the Air District. "We had allocated all of the available reservations for the Stockton and Merced events in a week. And we were completely booked for the Visalia event a few weeks after that."

Due to the tremendous public response, the District created a waiting list for residents who made requests after all of the available mowers had been reserved. Those on the waiting list will be called if residents with confirmed reservations fail to keep their scheduled appointment times.

This is the second year the District has invested \$200,000 in the Clean Green Yard Machines program to provide incentives for Valley residents to make air-friendly choices. With the Air District subsidy, the final purchase price of the battery-powered mower will be \$178 plus tax, a significant savings from the \$360 retail price.

District Planning Director Robert Dowell commented that the District chose to invest in this program because lawnmowers can create 40 times more pollution per hour of use than a late model car. "Nationally, five percent of smog is caused by lawn and yard equipment," Dowell said.

The Clean Green Yard Machines program is sponsored by the California Integrated Waste Management Board; the City of Visalia; and the counties of Merced, San Joaquin and Tulare.