

IN THE NEWS – Dec. 3, 2004

Season's first burn ban today

Residents using wood in fireplaces face fines.

By Tim Eberly / The Fresno Bee

Friday, December 3, 2004

Air officials are not asking - they're telling - residents of Fresno and Tulare counties to refrain today from a favorite holiday pastime: burning wood in fireplaces.

On Thursday, the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District announced its first burn ban of the winter season. Between midnight Thursday and midnight Friday, residents of the two counties will face fines if they're caught burning wood in fireplaces, stoves or heaters.

This is the second season of the residential burn rule. Last year, Valley air district spokeswoman Janelle Schneider said, there were 62 incidents of burning that resulted in warnings.

This season, the district is cracking down. After a burn ban Nov. 20 in Kern County, air officials issued six written violation notices to residents, who are facing fines that range from \$50 to \$1,000.

Schneider said air district officials field complaints from residents who notice their neighbors using fireplaces. They also have staffers who will be looking for people ignoring the ban. "We do get calls," she said. "We would go out and check it out."

The ban was issued because local counties' air quality index is expected to be harmfully high today. When the AQI rises above 151, a no-burn order must be issued. Forecasters reported the AQI today will be 153 in Fresno County and 152 in Tulare County.

"That's largely a result of wood-burning," Schneider said. "It's a common wintertime problem."

In November, air officials asked Fresno County residents to voluntarily avoid wood-burning at least 16 times, but there was no ban. Schneider said the high rate of wood-burning, coupled with the stagnant weather, contributed to today's ban.

She also said there will likely be more burn bans during the cold-weather season, which runs until Feb. 28. In the winter, residential wood-burning sends about 24 tons of particle pollution, known as particulate matter, into the air each day.

"We don't really have a number, but I think we're anticipating having a few days where we're going to have to prohibit wood-burning," Schneider said.

Also today, residents of Madera and Merced counties are being asked to voluntarily abstain from using wood-burning fireplaces. That's because the AQI rates in those counties will be between 100 and 150. In Merced County, it is forecast to be 130 today, compared with 114 in Madera County.

Anyone whose sole source of heat is wood, who lives above 3,000 feet elevation or who doesn't have access to natural gas is exempt from the ban.

To report violations, call the air district at (800) 870-1037 in Madera, Fresno and Kings counties; call (800) 926-5550 in Tulare County and the Valley portions of Kern County.

To determine wood-burning status, call (800) 766-4463 for air-quality updates in English or Spanish. Updates in Hmong are available toll-free at (877) 344-1212.

Schwarzenegger aide outlines California clean-fuel strategy

Tim Molloy, Associated Press Writer

in the S.F. Chronicle, Thursday, December 2, 2004

LOS ANGELES -- A top aide to Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger described the administration's plans to reduce California's oil dependence, calling Thursday for more conservation, fuel-efficient vehicles, and hydrogen power.

Terry Tamminen, the governor's newly appointed Cabinet secretary, delivered the speech by videotape at a conference on transportation. It was sponsored by Calstart, a consortium of government agencies and private companies, including automakers.

Tamminen said drivers should try to conserve fuel in the near-term, with the midterm goal of buying more fuel-efficient cars and the long-term goal of finding cleaner fuels than petroleum, including hydrogen.

"Proper tire inflation, using your air conditioner more sparingly, driving the speed limit -- basic simple things. No matter what you drive you can save 15 to 20 percent of your current fuel use," Tamminen said.

Tamminen, a former Santa Monica-based activist who once sued the state over ocean pollution, served as Schwarzenegger's director of the California Environmental Protection Agency until he took over Wednesday as Cabinet secretary. In his new role he serves as a liason between the governor and Cabinet.

Tamminen said unless California reduces its reliance on petroleum, it will likely face a shortage of petroleum in the next few years that will threaten the state's economy. He said drivers should conserve supply and seek alternative-fuel vehicles, such as those powered by electricity.

"We know battery electrics work extremely well," he said. "I drive a battery-electric around Sacramento and it's one of the best cars I've ever driven."

Tamminen predicted that the state would rely much more on hydrogen fuel in the next decade.

"By 2010 we will have a network of hydrogen fueling stations in the state, thousands of hydrogen vehicles to select from, initially from fleets and buses and mass transit but then expanding to consumer vehicles, and beyond that we can look for ways of moving toward hydrogen," he said.

Schwarzenegger has made hydrogen a key part of his environmental plans, but even some supporters of the technology say his timeline is overly optimistic.

Andy Weisser, an American Lung Association of California spokesman who attended the conference, commended the administration for backing hydrogen. But he said the state should also urge automakers to produce larger numbers of existing vehicles that are clean-burning and fuel efficient.

He noted that there are long waiting lists of people hoping to buy electric, natural gas, and hybrid vehicles.

"We need to focus on those existing technologies in addition

News from the San Joaquin Valley

S.F. Chronicle, Friday, Dec. 3, 2004

STOCKTON, Calif. (AP) -- Farmers have less than one month to submit paperwork showing they're taking measures to reduce dust in their operations, air officials said.

The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District wants to see dust reduction plans for farms larger than 100 contiguous acres by December 31. By reducing dust produced in farms, on construction sites and in wood-burning fireplaces, the air board hopes to cut pollution by 20 percent before 2010.

Some farmers said they're not worried about the looming deadline. They've been taking steps to fight dust for some time, they said.

The requirements amount to a pile of paperwork that merely proves farmers have long curbed dust on their own, said Joe Petersen of the San Joaquin Farm Bureau Federation.

"It's a joke," he said. "We were doing these things."

About 8,000 farms had to comply with the new rules, air board officials said. More than half of them have already submitted their dust reduction plans.

Research links dust in the air -- also known as particulate pollution -- to asthma attacks and lung disease. The San Joaquin Valley has never met federal standards on this type of pollution, and the valley's air basin is among the dirtiest in the country.

Appointments to coastal, gambling commissions announced

S. F Chronicle, Friday, Dec. 3, 2004

SACRAMENTO (AP) -- Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger appointed a member of the Santa Barbara City Council to the California Coastal Commission Thursday.

Dr. Dan Secord, 67, of Santa Barbara, has been a member of the city council since 1997, serving as mayor pro tempore, chair of the finance committee, liaison to two water boards and the Airport Commission, a member of a joint city-county Task Force Group on Solid Waste, a member of the Environmental Quality Committee for the League of California Cities and a member of the Air Pollution Control District Board.

Secord will be paid \$100 per meeting for the post, .

Also Thursday, Schwarzenegger appointed Edward C. Williams, 68, of Rancho San Luis Obispo, to a \$114,191-a-year post on the California Gambling Control Commission. After a 42-year law enforcement career, Williams now is a law enforcement management consultant.

Williams' appointment requires Senate confirmation; Secord's does not. Both men are Republicans, as is the governor.

Burn ban voluntary

Friday, Dec. 3, Modesto Bee

The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District asked people in Stanislaus, Merced and San Joaquin counties not to light their fireplaces today because of expected poor air quality. The restriction is voluntary. The wood-burning status is available in English and Spanish by calling 800-SMOG-INFO (766-4463) or by logging on to www.valleyair.org <<http://www.valleyair.org>>. Updates in Hmong are available toll-free at 877-344-1212.

Air board announces first no-burn day Fresno, Tulare county residents can't burn wood

By Staff reports

Visalia Times-Delta, Friday, Dec. 3, 2004

Residents in Tulare and Fresno counties are prohibited today from using wood-burning fireplaces, heating stoves or inserts.

The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District ordered a ban Thursday afternoon on wood-burning in the two counties. The ban lasts until midnight.

The Valley Air District also has asked residents in Kern, Madera, Merced, San Joaquin and Stanislaus counties to voluntarily refrain from burning solid fuels like firelogs and pellets.

It is the first mandatory wood-burning ban ordered for the two counties during the district's Check Before You Burn season, which runs Nov. 1 to Feb. 28. The program's goal is to reduce air pollution in the San Joaquin Valley.

Brenda Turner, a spokeswoman for the air district, said a mandatory no-burn order was issued this season in Kern County on Nov. 20. Turner also said two no-burn days were ordered last year in Kern and Fresno counties.

Today's wood-burning ban doesn't apply to natural gas or propane stoves, homes at 3,000 feet or higher elevations, or residences where no other heating device exists. Homes in areas without natural gas service also are exempt from the ban.

Residents who violate the ban could be subject to fines.

Wood-burning status is available by calling 1-800-766-4463 or visiting [www. valleyair.org](http://www.valleyair.org)
<<http://www.valleyair.org>>. Times-Delta readers also can check the front of the Local section.