

Is there a law about when I can use my fireplace?

Lodi News Sentinal, Monday, March 15, 2010

Dear Jennifer: With the recent cold and rainy weather, I'd like to use my fireplace more often, but isn't there a law that dictates when I can do that?

It depends what time of year you want to light your fireplace.

The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution District has a program in place November through February called "Check Before You Burn." By calling their phone number or visiting their Web site during the winter season, you can find out whether you can use your wood-burning fireplace or wood stove.

If you don't comply, you can be ticketed and fined. Last season, there were 65 violations, according to the pollution district.

The annual program was founded in 2003 and restricts the use of residential wood-burning devices when air quality deteriorates. This is believed to prevent the build-up of certain air pollution.

According to a report issued at the beginning of the month, the restrictions seem to be working.

In the 2009-10 season, there was a 57 percent decrease in the number of unhealthy days (based on the Air Quality Index) valley-wide over the 2008-09 season. The number of days that exceeded the federal health standard for fine-particulate pollution during the wood-burning season also declined by 41 percent over last year.

Visit www.valleyair.org for more information. During the wood-burning season, call (800) SMOG-INFO to check on the forecast.

Community events: Commuters urged to 'go green'

Bakersfield Californian, Saturday, March 13, 2010

Kern Council of Governments and the Kern County Department of Public Health are urging area commuters to "go green" for St. Patrick's Day by walking, biking, carpooling or taking the bus to work on Wednesday.

As an incentive, Rideshare partners are handing out stickers to participating individuals. The stickers will be available at the following locations:

- Kern Council of Governments, 1401 19th St., Suite 300
- GET, available through Downtown Transit Center kiosks
- Kern Regional Transit, available from drivers on all morning routes
- Kern County Department of Public Health, 1800 Mt. Vernon Ave.
- Bike Bakersfield, 1708 Chester Ave.

For more information, call 861-2191 or go to www.commutekern.org.

Agency gives electric trucks the green light

By Janis Mara, staff writer

Contra Costa Times & Tri-Valley Herald, Friday, March 12, 2010

Electrifying the delivery of strawberries, bread, packages and other items, a major state agency has approved zero-emission electric trucks made by a Stockton company.

The California Air Resources Board on Thursday approved Electric Vehicles International's fully electric return-to-base trucks. The term refers to trucks that start out at a warehouse, deliver items and then return to the starting point, which electric trucks need to do so they can plug in and charge up overnight.

"Our vehicles go 60, 80 or 115 miles depending on the battery pack size the customer chooses," said Summer Pennino of EVI. "It's (the designation) for companies that go out, make their deliveries, return, charge up, then go out and do it all over again." Pennino said companies like FedEx, UPS or Safeway were the kind of businesses that might use EVI's trucks.

Now that the trucks have garnered approval from the air resources board, they can take to the road in California, which could make driving behind a truck a lot less unpleasant experience. Though the board has cracked down on diesel trucks, limiting the amount of emissions they can spew into the atmosphere, the trucks still emit fumes. EVI's vehicles do not.

Companies that buy EVI trucks can get rebates of up to \$20,000 per vehicle through the air resource board's Clean Vehicle Rebate Program, Pennino said. The program aims to reduce greenhouse gases and limit pollution in California.

EVI is moving its headquarters from Mexico to Stockton "to take advantage of these incentive opportunities that benefit our customers and get EVI trucks on the road," said Steve Riley, the company's vice president of sales, in a statement.