

San Joaquin Valley air alert remains in effect today

Bee Staff Reports

Modesto Bee, Monday, August 29, 2011

MODESTO -- The San Joaquin County's first Air Alert, which went into effect last week, was extended through today, authorities said.

The alerts, part of a new campaign by the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District, are an effort to guide residents in taking steps to reduce ozone violations that have resulted in a \$29 million federal fine.

Valley residents are paying it in part through a \$12 annual increase in vehicle registration fees.

Officials said high temperatures, stagnant air flow and increased emissions were reasons for last week's alert, and more of the same is forecast for today.

"The response to this Air Alert has been overwhelmingly positive and proactive," said Seyed Sadredin, the air district's executive director and air pollution control officer. "The efforts of the Valley's population is what will make the difference in avoiding this critical ozone threshold."

About 80 percent of the Valley's ozone-forming emissions are produced by vehicle use, the air district said.

Residents can reduce smog-forming emissions by refraining from idling when dropping off or picking up students, carpooling or vanpooling, and refraining from using drive-through services.

Businesses and municipalities can reduce emissions by shifting operations to early morning or late evening, as in lawn care; offering flexible work schedules, and encouraging carpools and vanpools for employees, the air district said.

Businesses can also enroll at no cost in the Healthy Air Living Partner program.

Air Alert Extended Through Monday

San Joaquin Valley Air Remains Unhealthy

KCRA.com, Monday, August 29, 2011

MODESTO, Calif. -- The Valley's first air alert was extended through Monday, according to the San Joaquin Air Pollution Control District.

Several news conferences to discuss the alert are set for 11 a.m. in Modesto, Fresno and Bakersfield, a news release states.

"The response to this Air Alert has been overwhelmingly positive and proactive," said Seyed Sadredin, the Air District's executive director and air pollution control officer, in a written statement. "The efforts of the Valley's population is what will make the difference in avoiding this critical ozone threshold."

The alert was declared Tuesday and includes the counties of San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Merced, Fresno, Madera, Kings, Tulare and portions of Kern.

Air Alerts are put into effect when conditions may lead to ozone (smog) formation that results in exceeding health-based standards. This can trigger financial penalties from the federal government.

The air alert was supposed to end Sunday, which is when officials said the stagnant air and heat was supposed to subside and help the air circulate.

Since Tuesday, there were some elevated levels of emissions, but overall, the levels do not exceed federal standards.