

In Stockton, heat takes August off

Stockton Record, Thursday, Sept. 1, 2011

For the first time in 20 years, Stockton made it through August without hitting 100 degrees.

The relatively cool weather may help explain why the San Joaquin Valley, for the first time since record-keeping began in the 1980s, saw ozone pollution levels stay within a federal standard each day of the month.

Last week, expecting ozone levels to rise, Valley air cops called their first-ever Air Alert. They asked the public to carpool to work and school, since back-to-school traffic and late-summer heat appear to be two primary factors in the formation of ozone.

The Air Alert ended earlier this week. Ozone violations could still take place in September, but for now, the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District said conditions have improved.

"By all indications, we believe the Air Alert did help," district spokesman Anthony Presto said.

There is more work to be done. The district must go three years without a single ozone violation if a new \$12 vehicle registration fee for all Valley drivers is to be avoided in the future.

But getting through the entire month of August without any violations is a good start, Presto said.

Stockton last saw triple-digit heat on July 6. At 56 days, the non-100-degree day streak is among the longest in recent years.

With an average of about five 100-degree days each year, August is second only to July. Stockton also had no 100-degree days in August in 1954, 1956, 1985 and 1991.

This year, the closest we've gotten was 98 degrees on July 28. Other than that, high temperatures have ranged from the upper 70s to the mid-90s.

The National Weather Service expects high temperatures over Labor Day weekend to hover around 93 or 94 degrees.