

Colder weather ahead, wood-burning prohibition to take effect

By Jill Cowan, Californian staff writer

Bakersfield Californian, Wednesday, Nov. 2, 2011

Now that a mild Halloween has come and gone, Bakersfield residents should steel themselves for dropping temperatures (and a little fall of rain) later this week, the National Weather Service said Tuesday.

"Friday we're only going to manage to get up to the upper 50s," NWS meteorologist Jim Andersen said. "So yeah, a big change -- and we're going to have a chance for showers on Friday as well."

Andersen said showers will be a possibility starting Thursday night, though he said that likely won't be a "huge rain event."

"The big story here is the cold," he said.

At higher elevations -- like 3,500 feet in the northern Sierra Mountains and at 4,500 feet in the southern Sierras -- Andersen said, it may even snow.

Still, "it's not going to be a blockbuster as far as amounts of (precipitation) -- a couple inches at the highest elevations," he said. "We're not talking big snows here."

Though the valley will likely avoid nor'easter-like conditions, Andersen said the normal temperature for Bakersfield in November is 65.7 degrees, meaning Friday's anticipated drop from the rest of the week's mid-70s down to the 50s will definitely register.

"People will notice it," Andersen said.

Temperatures are expected to creep back up into the 60s starting Saturday, and will "hover right there around normal" early next week.

And as for the rain, he said, "we're pretty much right on schedule."

The beginning of November is usually the start of the rainy period, Andersen said.

But Kern County residents might want to hold off on having pre-holiday logs crackling in the fireplace.

A news release from the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District said a "daylong, mandatory" wood-burning curtailment will be in effect from 12 a.m. Wednesday to the following midnight in the valley portion of Kern County.

The wood-burning prohibition (for households that have access to natural gas service) is the second for Kern County this season.

Prohibition violations -- which include burning any solid fuel in a residential fireplace or wood-burning device -- are subject to fines, the news release said.

For more information about the wood-burning forecast, which is tied to air quality measurements, visit www.valleyair.org.

Movie studio shows interest in Crows Landing business park

by Jonathan Partridge

Patterson Irrigator, Wednesday, Nov. 2, 2011 Patterson Irrigator

A Malibu-based movie studio is eyeing the proposed West Park industrial park for a 1.2 million square-foot movie studio.

Representatives from Mare Island Studios, which includes former Lucasfilm executive Howard G. Kazanjian as president, toured the former U.S. Naval Airfield in Crows Landing last week, county officials said. Information about the company's proposal, including a letter of interest, was included Monday in a county update on the West Park project.

“So far, (county officials) have been extremely refreshing to work with, and we’re very pleased about that,” Mare Island Studios CEO Carissa Carpenter said Tuesday. “We hope that that continues. They seem to want the jobs and to want the employment.”

The studio company seeks to build a “world-class motion picture film and television studio facility” that would include staging areas, a set and filming buildings about 415 acres at the proposed business park at the future 2,930-acre business park, Carpenter wrote in a letter of interest to Dick Monteith, chairman of Stanislaus County’s board of supervisors.

“We believe we have a very unique opportunity to create hundreds of well-paying jobs, both in the short and long term, build a sustainable, green campus that will inspire the development of a new employment sector in your County, and actively participate in the further diversification of your regional economy,” Carpenter wrote. “This activity will do much to revitalize those local West Side economies severely impacted by recent down turns.”

The studio would need a variety of workers, including landscapers, construction workers, accountants and makeup artists among others, Carpenter said.

“Everything that entails normal life is what we draw on,” Carpenter said.

The company also would hope to shoot films in surrounding communities such as Patterson and Newman and would want to work closely with those cities, Carpenter said.

“We’re going to be all over your front lawns and streets,” Carpenter said. “Our goal is to be involved in the community because we want to shoot in the community.”

Mare Island Studios previously hoped to build a studio on Mare Island, which formerly housed a U.S. Navy base and shipyard in the city of Vallejo, but the studio could not reach an agreement with the city because of disagreements over finances and deadlines.

Carpenter’s previous project, Declaration Studios, had hoped to build a movie studio, an amusement park and hotels in the greater Sacramento area about 10 years ago.

A proposed site in El Dorado Hills ran into complications because of serpentine – or natural asbestos – in the ground, while a site in Sutter County would have taken too long to undergo the environmental review process, Carpenter said.

She summed up the challenges in Vallejo as a combination of “personalities and politics.” In addition, she said the infrastructure there was too expensive.

The group that makes up Mare Island Studios is the same group that comprised Declaration Studios, and they have worked together for about 15 years, she said. Most of them are now working for various companies within the movie industry, she said.

Carpenter said she was shocked at how nice Stanislaus County officials have been thus far.

Though she remained optimistic, she noted that placing a film studio in the middle of an industrial complex would have its share of challenges.

“We have to mediate it with a developer,” she said. “It needs to feel like a resort as well as a business center combination. You don’t want to have a family live next to something that’s uncomfortable.”

Keith Boggs, Stanislaus County’s deputy executive officer for economic development, expressed enthusiasm about the prospect of a new industry in Stanislaus County.

West Park developer Gerry Kamilos stressed that the company is only exploring the idea of using the former Crows Landing naval base, which stands between Interstate 5 and Highway 33 between the town of Crows Landing and the city of Patterson.

“It’s really very exploratory at this point to see if everything fits well,” Kamilos said.

Still, he said West Park would be an ideal location for the movie studio because it could be well secured and because of available housing for employees in the nearby communities of Patterson,

Newman and Diablo Grande. In addition, it has easy access to Interstate 5, and the geography within a 25-mile radius of the site is diverse, ranging from farmland, to old-style neighborhoods to the area surrounding the San Joaquin River, he said.

Monday's county update also contained information about the status of the project and included a Notice of Preparation for the project's environmental impact report.

West Park's plans include an inland port, where trains would drop off goods at the business park after making two daily trips to and from the Port of Oakland, and an 850-acre solar farm that could generate up to 150 megawatts.

The NOP also notes that the project would include industrial and commercial uses, a workforce training facility and a general aviation airport as well as public facility improvements and water supply and wastewater collection services for Crows Landing.

Residents have until Dec. 1 to comment on the Notice of Preparation, and the county plans to solicit opinions at a couple of public forums later this month.

The first meeting will take place from 6 to 8 p.m. Nov. 10 at the Bonita Elementary School cafeteria at 425 Fink Road in Crows Landing. The second forum will take place Nov. 17 at the Stanislaus County Ag Center's Harvest Hall Pavilion, at 3800 Cornucopia Way, in Modesto.

Stanislaus County Supervisor Jim DeMartini, the board's West Side who has criticized West Park in the past, said Tuesday that he appreciates that the project has shrunk from its original 4,800-acre size. Though he still doesn't like the project's rail component and he remains cynical about the solar farm portion, he did not have an opinion about having a film studio there.

"The thing I would be more concerned about is anything that produces a lot of [air pollution](#) or water pollution or is a high water user, such as a cannery," DeMartini said. "It sounds like (the film studio) is pretty people intensive. I don't see that water requirements would be of heavy concern."

Bad air, high winds prompt cautionary statement, wood-burning prohibitions tonight

By Sun-Star staff

Merced Sun-Star, Late Tuesday, November 1, 2011

The San Joaquin Air Pollution Control District said deteriorating air quality throughout the air basin has prompted a health cautionary statement and wood-burning prohibitions in various counties.

The health caution because of gusty winds is in effect through this evening in Merced, San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Madera, western Fresno and Kings counties. Winds may produce areas of localized blowing dust, which can result in unhealthy concentrations of particulate matter 10 microns and smaller, or PM10.

"Take precautions to protect your health if you are in an area of blowing dust," said Samir Sheikh, director of the Air District's Strategies and Incentives Department.

Exposure to particle pollution can cause serious health problems, aggravate lung disease, trigger asthma attacks and acute bronchitis, and increase risk of respiratory infections, the district said in a news release.

Residents in these areas are advised to use caution through this evening. People with heart or lung diseases should follow their doctors' advice for dealing with episodes of unhealthy air quality. Additionally, older adults and children should avoid prolonged exposure, strenuous activities or heavy exertion. Everyone else should reduce prolonged exposure, strenuous activities or heavy exertion.

There are two levels of wood-burning forecast: "Wood Burning Prohibited" or "Please Burn Cleanly." When a prohibition is declared, burning any solid fuel in a residential fireplace or wood-

burning device is not permitted. Residences without access to natural gas service or where wood-burning is the sole source of heat are exempt from these prohibitions.

Prohibition violations are subject to fines.

For more information about Check Before You Burn or the daily wood-burning forecast, visit www.valleyair.org. Forecasts are also available at 1-800 SMOG INFO (766-4463). Sun-Star staff

Winds prompt air quality warning

By Sabra Stafford

Turlock Journal, Late Tuesday, November 1, 2011

The current deteriorating state of the Central Valley's air basin has prompted air officials to issue a health warning and the first burning prohibition of the season in several counties.

Because of gusty winds kicking up large amounts of dust and particles, the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District issued a health warning to residents, especially those with respiratory problems.

The warning was for Stanislaus, Merced, San Joaquin, Madera, western Fresno and Kings counties.

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People with heart or lung diseases should follow their doctors' advice for dealing with episodes of unhealthy air quality. Additionally, older adults and children should avoid prolonged exposure, strenuous activities or heavy exertion. Everyone else should reduce prolonged exposure, strenuous activities or heavy exertion.

"Take precautions to protect your health if you are in an area of blowing dust," said Samir Sheikh, director of the district's Strategies and Incentives Department.

The district's Check Before You Burn program began Tuesday and already the district has issued two restrictions. Wood-burning curtailments have been issued for Tulare and the Valley portion of Kern counties for today and tonight.

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Air quality alert issued in San Joaquin County

By The Record

Stockton Record, Late Tuesday, November 1, 2011

STOCKTON — Gusty winds this afternoon prompted officials to issue an air quality alert in San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Merced, Madera and western Fresno and Kings counties.

Strong winds kick up dust, including tiny particles that can aggravate lung disease, trigger asthma attacks and increase the risk of respiratory infections. The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District recommended that people reduce their exposure to the dust and avoid strenuous activities or exertion.

Earlier today the National Weather Service issued a wind advisory for the Sacramento Valley and the Delta west of Stockton. Gusts topped 30 mph at the Stockton Metropolitan Airport, but winds were expected to decrease into the evening hours.