

APCD offers program to replace of old lawn mowers

Taft Midway Driller, Wednesday, April 13, 2011

New funding and a simplified, regional voucher request process will make clean, electric lawn mowers available to more Valley residents through the Clean, Green Yard Machine program beginning Monday.

“This is our most popular consumer program, and one that pays off in big clean-air dividends for everyone in the Valley,” said Seyed Sadredin, the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District’s executive director and air pollution control officer. “We’re very pleased to be able to offer this program again this year, and to more residents than ever.”

Local funding for this program was authorized by the District’s Governing Board in combination with a state grant for residents of the San Joaquin Valley. Additionally, the District partnered with the Sierra Club and the Rose Foundation for Communities and the Environment in Kern County to provide additional vouchers for residents in the Valley portion of Kern County.

The lawn mower trade-in program replaces old, polluting, gas-powered mowers with clean, electric Neuton mowers for just \$50 (14” cutting blade) or \$100 (19” cutting blade), including shipping, with the trade-in of an older, gas-powered mower.

New, regional phone numbers dedicated to Clean, Green Yard Machines will streamline and simplify the voucher request process:

Local residents can call 661-392-5685

Vouchers MUST be requested by phone in advance beginning April 11 and will be issued on a first-come, first-served basis until funds are exhausted. Limit one per household or three per business. Program participants must be residents of the San Joaquin Valley air basin: San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Merced, Madera, Fresno, Kings, Tulare and the Valley air basin portion of Kern counties.

After receiving a voucher, the applicant must turn in a working, gas-powered mower at an authorized recycler in their county (a list of recyclers is available at www.valleyair.org).

Then, they can phone Neuton at a toll-free number and order their new, cordless, electric lawn mower, which will be delivered to their door.

Trading in a gas-powered mower for an electric mower is one way to reduce personal emissions and clean up the Valley’s air. Emissions from using a gas-powered mower for one hour are equivalent to driving 40 late-model cars for the same length of time.

For complete details about the program, visit www.valleyair.org or call a regional District office: Fresno, 559-230-6000; Bakersfield, 661-392-550; or Modesto, 209-557-6400.

Power plant closer to approval

by TP staff

Tracy Press, Late Wednesday, April 13, 2011

Despite the concerns of several Mountain House residents, a power plant planned near the western border of San Joaquin County received a thumbs-up, bringing final approval one step closer.

The California Energy Commission’s siting committee, which ensures proposed locations for power facilities are appropriate, recommended that the commission approve the Mariposa Energy Project, a 200-megawatt power plant planned for the eastern hinterland of Alameda County — 7 miles northwest of Tracy and just more than 2 miles west of Mountain House.

A final approval of the natural-gas burning facility that will put out as much as 200 megawatts in a “peaker plant” capacity could come after a 30 day public comment period, which began Wednesday, April 13.

According to the recommendation, "... the proposed Mariposa Energy Project will, as mitigated, have no significant impacts on the environment and complies with all applicable laws, ordinances, regulations, and standards.

"This decision is based exclusively upon the record established during this certification proceeding and summarized in this document."

Several parties, including the Mountain House Community Services District board of directors, have gone on record opposing the plant because of its possible impact on air quality and property values.