

[Bakersfield Californian, Opinion, Tuesday, May 1, 2012:](#)

July Fourth laser show? Sounds like fun

Here's an idea whose time seems to have come: Enjoy Fourth of July "fireworks" with something other than fireworks. Celebrate the color and spectacle of a dramatic showcase in the night sky without the sulfuric aftertaste and cascading ash.

That's the plan for at least three San Joaquin Valley cities this summer, thanks to a planned experiment by the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District. Traditional Independence Day fireworks displays fill the air with smoke and metals like magnesium, copper and barium, which can lead to skin irritations and muscle weakness. Between 9 a.m. and 11 p.m. each July 4, particulate readings often soar many times beyond federal standards.

Before you roll your eyes at this latest effort by the air district to sap every ounce of enjoyment out of Central Valley life, consider that laser light shows can do things fireworks shows cannot approach. Paired with a musical soundtrack, a laser show can be every bit as enthralling -- and without the shroud of manufactured smoke.

The valley air district will help make it happen with a \$30,000 expenditure for three July Fourth celebrations, including one somewhere in the south valley. If the program is well received, it could be expanded next year. Now, if the air district (or someone) could only figure out how to quiet those howling dogs.

[Porterville Recorder editorial, Tuesday, April 24, 2012:](#)

You can breathe a little easier

While the air in the Central Valley is certainly considered among the worst in the nation, residents of Porterville can breathe a little easier in knowing that on most days the air over the Orange Belt is cleaner than many other areas of the Valley.

Thanks to what is called the Fresno Eddy — a current of air that flows south along the west side of the Valley — tends to carry the smog, especially the smog that flows into the Valley from the Bay Area. Eventually, that smog curls in the southern end of the Valley south of Bakersfield and the air flows back north toward Porterville.

However, on most days, that flow of air directs some of the dirty air away from Porterville.

We were told, the air flows more toward the middle of the Valley and only skirts the east side. That is why the city of Arvin in Kern County has some of the worst air in the Valley.

While the air over the Orange Belt is cleaner, it certainly is not healthy to breathe every day.

On many days, the air here is just as dirty as most areas of the Valley — a few times ever dirtier. But, in The Recorder's review of ozone and particulate matter readings, on most days checked the air here was a little better than found in Clovis or Hanford.

This, however, does not mean we all don't need to do our part to keep our air as clean as possible. The Valley has made great strides over the years to clean up the air and much of that has come from citizens who comply with the "No Burn Day" rules and reduce their driving when the air gets unhealthy. It takes all of us to make our air clean and the more we do voluntarily, the less need there is for more regulations, some of which hurt businesses and cut jobs.

The goal is to make our Valley a safe place in which to live and breathe not only today, but for generations to come.

[Letter to the Fresno Bee, Sat., April 28, 2012:](#)

Polluting leaf blowers

It's time for the Quail Lake community to take a leadership position for clean air and noise pollution in our Valley.

Let's be the first community to ban gasoline leaf blowers. They are polluting our air with particulates and noise. Let's use a broom to reduce noise and particulates.

All you have to do is watch our gardeners and neighbors mow the lawn and blow particulates into our neighborhood. All you hear in the morning are leaf blowers polluting and spoiling the quiet of our neighborhood.

The Quail Lake board should appoint a committee to study this ban, and its affect on air, noise and cost.

Dick Foell