

A better Bakersfield

Bakersfield Californian, Saturday, June 2, 2012

(Note: Only categories with air quality relationship were included here)

Prepare to honor the city's best at the 2012 Beautiful Bakersfield Awards Banquet. The efforts of individuals, groups, businesses and organizations will be recognized tonight at the DoubleTree Hotel in an event presented by the Greater Bakersfield Chamber of Commerce. Watch the event at 8 tonight on KGET-TV Channel 17.

Environmental

An individual, group or organization that promotes preservation and conservation of our local environment.

BARC -- William M. Thomas Material Recovery Facility: The 17,000-square-foot facility housing state-of-the-art equipment to handle co-mingled recycled materials provides jobs for developmentally disabled.

City of Bakersfield -- Solid Waste Division: Partnering with 52 schools, the city's Solid Waste Division created an easy food composting and classroom recycling program.

Greater Bakersfield Green Expo: More than 3,000 attended the event focused on student education, with a high school "Recycled Materials" arts competition.

IKEA -- Solar Project: The second largest single roof solar installation in California (sixth largest in the nation), now generating 60 percent or more renewable energy.

Kern Green: Kern Green educates businesses, organizations and schools how to reduce environmental impacts, save money and create healthier work spaces.

The Uplands of the Kern River Parkway: Restoration of a blighted one-mile stretch of the Kern River Parkway to its native state with added enhancements.

Public/private partnership

The use of public/private funds in a partnership effort to enhance the quality of life in our community.

Second annual MS Service Day -- National MS Society and Chevron: With funding from Chevron, volunteers assisted residents with multiple sclerosis with home improvement projects.

Bakersfield Safe Streets Partnership -- Bakersfield Police Department, Kern County Superintendent of Schools: Initiative targets gun violence committed by gang members, offering life alternatives.

CHiPs for Kids Toy Drive -- California Highway Patrol and Community Partners: This holiday collection drive distributed toys to 1,000 local children.

Kern Delta Park and Ride: Aiming to reduce air pollution, the [Valley Air District](#), KernCOG, Golden Empire Transit, Tejon Ranch, IKEA, Famous Footwear, TA/Petro and the County of Kern joined forces to transport workers.

Law Day at the Mall -- Kern County Bar Association, Kern County Law Library and Greater Bakersfield Legal Assistance: More than 30 local attorneys provided 200-plus consultations, and volunteers assisted 800 others in a day of free legal information.

League of Dreams -- Terrio Physical Therapy & Fitness, City of Bakersfield and North of the River Parks and Recreation Districts: Serving more than 150 special-needs kids through baseball and basketball, League of Dreams makes sure every child has a chance to play.

Small Business Development Center (SBDC) -- Cal State Bakersfield: Led by SBDC director Brandon Martin, counselors and local businesses, the center has helped start new businesses and create jobs.

State Farm Sports Village -- City of Bakersfield, State Farm Insurance and American Youth Soccer Region 73: The first phase opened in 2011 to accommodate more than 2,000 youth players.

[Fresno Bee Blog, Friday, May 31, 2012:](#)

Haze doesn't equate to ozone pollution in summer

By Mark Grossi

Don't let Central California's cruddy haze fool you in summer. Haze does not equal summertime ozone pollution.

An Associated Press story this week about bad air in Sequoia National Park left that distinct impression, and it misleads people into thinking a hazy day is a high-ozone day.

I know because I've done the same thing to readers. My apologies.

Haze is basically created by particle pollution -- microscopic dust, soot, droplets of moisture, chemicals and other debris. It's more dangerous than ozone, medical researchers say, because the tiniest particles can pass through the body's defenses to trigger lung and heart problems.

Ozone is bluish in color, experts say, but I've never been able to spot it. It's invisible, as far as I'm concerned.

In Sequoia, ozone mostly comes from gases drifting up from the Valley's cars, trucks, farms and industries. When it's hazy, ozone can be a part of the haze.

So here's the problem. Readers have told me they don't worry about ozone when the sky is less hazy. They think a heavy dose of the haze means ozone. Unfortunately, the air could be filled with ozone pollution on a warm, still day with just a little haze or none at all.

Please, take note of the messages and warnings in the visitors center at national parks. Check the forecast and the hourly readings with the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District. And I'll avoid using the term smog, unless I explain it.

And there's one other thing about the AP story. It says Sequoia is the most polluted national park.

Actually, last year it had more ozone violations than any other place in the country -- including Los Angeles, San Bernardino, Bakersfield, Fresno, Houston and Atlanta. None of those well-known smog traps was worse than Sequoia National Park. I broke that story last fall, and I still find it astounding.