

Free emissions check planned in Merced

Merced Sun-Star, Thurs., June 25, 2015

Merced-area drivers who have owned a car for more than six months may qualify for free vehicle emissions testing and diagnostic inspection Saturday.

The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District and Valley Clean Air Now, a nonprofit, will offer the free service as part of their Tune In and Tune Up car cleanup event.

It takes place 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday at the Merced County Fairgrounds parking lot near Martin Luther King Jr. Way and 11th Street.

The event can typically handle more than 500 vehicles. Owners of cars that do not pass the test but can be repaired will receive a \$500 voucher for work at a participating STAR-certified smog shop, according to organizers. The event will only provide screenings, and no smog certificates will be issued.

Eligible vehicles must be legally registered in California, and owners must be San Joaquin Valley residents.

Drivers at past events have waited two hours or more to get their car checked. Free food and drinks will be available.

The event is part of an outreach effort that aims to eliminate mobile-source pollutants generated by cars. According to the Valley CAN website, the Valley is home to a large number of older vehicles, many of which do not have up-to-date smog certificates.

According to event organizers, the more vehicles that are tested and repaired, the cleaner the air will be for Valley residents. More than 10,000 cars have been repaired to state smog standards through the program since 2003.

Tune In and Tune Up events take place throughout the year in different Valley locations. Other upcoming checks are planned July 11 at West Hills College in Coalinga; July 25 at the Fresno Fairgrounds; and Aug. 1 at the Chowchilla Fairgrounds.

People with questions can contact organizers at TITUEvent@valleycan.org or (800) 806-2004.