



Valley Air News

A publication of the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District

November 2000

Wintertime Air Pollution



In November, the Valley Air District will kick-off the *Please Don't Light Tonight* public education campaign. Through this program, the District educates Valley residents about the harmful effects of wintertime air pollution and asks them to voluntarily postpone using their wood-burning fireplaces and stoves on the most stagnant winter evenings. Because burning natural gas creates minimal particulate matter emissions, the *Please Don't Light Tonight* program does not apply to natural gas inserts. Additionally, the request is not directed to anyone living above 3,000 feet or to those whose only source of heat is burning wood.

Planning Director Robert Dowell explained that although this is the third year of the program, it is a critical one for two reasons: the District is concerned that the higher energy prices may tempt more residents to burn wood for heat; and the rising popularity of terra cotta patio stoves.

"In most cases, using a fireplace is a more expensive and less effective way to heat a home," Dowell said. He cited tests conducted at Auburn University rating the heating efficiency of burning wood in a traditional fireplace from 21 to 25 percent. Because most of the heat goes up the chimney flue, fireplaces only warm the area surrounding the hearth. By contrast, furnace vents are placed throughout a home, distributing the heat over a wider area.

This year, the District is also urging Valley residents not to use terra cotta patio stoves, sometimes called "chimeneas." These free-standing, clay pots have no emission control and create as much pollution as a wood-burning fireplace. Because few contain safety screens, they may also pose a fire hazard from escaping embers.

On special occasions, San Joaquin Valley residents can enjoy a cleaner fire by following these air friendly tips:

- Install an EPA-certified fireplace insert, wood or pellet stove.
- Use only dry, seasoned wood.
- Refrain from burning newspapers, magazines or painted wood.
- Build small, hot fires instead of large smoldering ones.
- Have the chimney professionally inspected and swept annually.

To obtain the daily air quality information and *Please Don't Light Tonight* status, call (800) SMOG-INFO or log onto the District's web site @ www.valleyair.org.



Reclassified Air Status

The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently announced that it will propose to split Eastern Kern County from the San Joaquin Valley nonattainment area, creating a new planning area.

Because of the mountains, remoteness, low population density, few emission sources and distinct air quality, the EPA believes that the eastern portion of Kern County should qualify as a separate nonattainment area.

The new proposal seeks to redraw the San Joaquin Valley planning area boundaries to include the areas south of Sacramento to the Tehachapi Mountains. A new Eastern Kern County planning area would include those areas south and east of the Tehachapis.

As part of the announcement, the EPA notified the Valley Air District that it intends to reclassify the air basin to severe status for failure to meet the federal standard for ground-level ozone. The EPA expects to publish notice of the bump-up, as it is commonly called, in the *Federal Register* within the next 30 days.

For additional information, visit the EPA's web page @ www.epa.gov/region09.

GOVERNING BOARD REVIEW

The Governing Board took the following action during the October 12th Governing Board Meeting:

- Approved and authorized application for the San Joaquin Valley Emergency Clean Air Attainment Program and allocated \$1,189,064.60 of DMV Surcharge Fee Revenue to the Heavy-Duty Engine Emission Reduction Program.
- Approved the agricultural Biomass-To-Energy Incentive Program Grant applications to the California Trade and Commerce Agency.
- Accepted radar wind profiler components from the San Joaquin Valleywide Air Pollution Study Agency.
- Received and filed proposed amendments to Rule 4653 (Adhesives). Set December 14, 2000 for the Public Hearing to consider the proposed amendments.
- Approved donation of emission monitoring equipment by Nuevo Energy.
- Approved donation of a portable environmental combustion analyzer by Bacharach, Inc.
- Received report from Citizens Advisory Committee on the October 3, 2000 meeting.
- Received verbal report from the California Air Resources Board (ARB) Board Meeting



The next Governing Board meeting will be held on Thursday, December 14, at 9:00 AM in the District's Central office in Fresno, and via video-teleconference in the Modesto and Bakersfield offices. (There is no November meeting.)

Smoke Management Guidelines



Earlier this year, the California Air Resources Board (ARB) extensively amended California's Smoke Management Guidelines for Agricultural and Prescribed Burning, commonly referred to as Title 17, earlier this year. During the amendment process, air districts and stakeholders raised a number of concerns regarding the implementation of the Guidelines. To address the issues, the ARB and the California Air Pollution Control Officers Association (CAPCOA) have established nine working groups. Each working group will focus on a particular issue and will consist of ARB staff, Valley Air District staff and interested stakeholders.

The working groups that represent the Valley Air District are as follows:

- Liaison Committee will oversee and act as a sounding board for all other working groups.
- Environmental Impact Report (EIR) Tool Development group will work with a consultant to develop an environmental impact report template that can be used by the air districts to meet California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements for their smoke management plans.
- Program Resource Needs, Program Funding, and Cost Recovery group will seek ways, in addition to fees, to recover air district costs associated with compliance for Title 17 requirements and also handle other cost related issues.
- Uniform Smoke Management Plan Development group will investigate and, if feasible, develop a uniform smoke management plan format for use by all land management agencies.
- Technical Tools Development group will investigate the feasibility of sharing available resources and technical information so as to promote efficient and consistent implementation of the Smoke Management Plan (SMP).
- Alternative Meteorological Criteria group will evaluate revised meteorological criteria for use in regulating agricultural and prescribed burning.
- Residential Woodburning group will consider how to address residential burning in the smoke management program.
- Public Education and Outreach group will develop public outreach tools on topics related to prescribed and agricultural burning.
- Alternatives to Burning group will evaluate the potential for developing alternatives to agricultural and prescribed burning.

For further information regarding activities of any of these working groups, call the Valley Air District at (559) 230-5800.

Spare the Air 2000 Wrap-up



The season began June 6, 2000 combining Drill Day with the Big Clean Air Pay Off – Take Two event. The event was a success with participation almost doubling from 1999.

The *Spare the Air* season officially ended September 29. Through the combined efforts of our Employer Partners, the public and mild temperatures, the number of unhealthy days remained low. The 2000 season recorded a total of 10 *Spare the Air* days in the Valley. Seven days were recorded in the Northern region and 10 days were recorded in the Central and Southern regions.

Three health advisories were recorded in Fresno and Kern Counties. Remember that *Spare the Air* tips can be practiced year round to help reduce pollution.

Vehicle Retirement a Clear Air Option



The Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) is paying \$1,000 for qualifying vehicles being voluntarily retired from operation. Vehicles must be passenger cars or light-to-medium trucks that are currently registered with the DMV and must have been continuously registered in California for at least the past two years.

Additionally, vehicles must not have a tampered emission-control system, must not be in the process of being sold nor being registered for the first time, and must need assistance to meet Smog Check requirements.

Finally, the Bureau of Automotive repair must receive a completed application within 90 days after the expiration date of the vehicle's registration with the DMV. For additional information please call (800) 622-7733.



In Memory of Robert J. Cabral

The Board of Directors and employees of the Valley Air District extend condolences to the family of Board Member and friend, Supervisor Robert J. Cabral, who recently passed away.

A native of San Joaquin County, Supervisor Cabral was active in agriculture for more than 30 years. In addition to serving on the San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors since 1993, his dedication to the community was evident by the many organizations he served. These included Delta College, Modesto Junior College, San Joaquin Council of Governments, San Joaquin County Rail Commission, Altamont Commuter Express Authority and the Cal Trans Rail Task Force.

A long-time member of the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District Board, Supervisor Cabral will be greatly missed.