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Attn: Local news, weather, health and assignment editors

Northern region – Modesto

Anthony Presto (209) 557-6472

Central/Southern regions – Fresno

Cassandra Melching (559) 230-5901

Spanish-language contact

Ana Stone (559) 230-5851

Update: Smoke from the Ferguson Fire in Mariposa County prompts health caution Valley-wide

Smoke from the Ferguson Fire in Mariposa County and other fires surrounding the Valley is affecting air quality in locations throughout the entire San Joaquin Valley, prompting local air pollution officials to issue a health cautionary statement Valley-wide. Smoke impacts will continue until the fires are extinguished.

Smoke from wildfires produces particulate matter which can trigger asthma attacks, aggravate chronic heart and lung diseases, and increase the risk of heart attack and stroke. Where conditions warrant, people with heart or lung disease should follow their doctors' advice for dealing with episodes of particulate exposure. People with existing respiratory conditions, young children and elderly people are especially susceptible to the health effects from these pollutants. Anyone being exposed to poor air quality or wildfire smoke should move inside to an air-conditioned environment.

Please be advised that the District's Real-time Air Advisory Network (RAAN) monitors are designed to detect the fine particulates (called PM2.5 which are microscopic in size and not visible to the human eye) that exist in smoke. Ash particles are much larger in size and will not be detected by our monitors. Therefore, an area may be experiencing ash impacts from potential fires while the PM monitor reflects a moderate reading. If you can smell smoke or see ash that is an indication that you should be treating air quality conditions as "Unhealthy" (RAAN Level 4 or higher) and remain indoors.

Residents can check the District's wildfire page at www.valleyair.org/wildfires for information about any current wildfires and whether they are impacting the Valley. The District's Real-time Air Advisory Network (RAAN) provides localized air quality data from an extensive air-monitoring network which allows Valley residents to track PM at any Valley address by visiting myraan.com. Residents can also follow air quality conditions by downloading the free "Valley Air" app, available in the Apple store or Google Play. For more information, visit www.valleyair.org or call a District office in Fresno (559-230-6000), Modesto (209-557-6400) or Bakersfield (661-392-5500).