

News Release



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Spare the Air ends another banner year

Improvement continues in summer smog levels

Sept. 29— In a continuing trend of dramatically reduced overall levels of summertime smog, just 18 Spare the Air Days were declared throughout the eight-county San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District, down from 27 such days in 2004.

“We’re seeing continued improvement in summertime air quality, and that’s encouraging,” said Jaime Holt, the District’s public education administrator.

Even last year’s total was a significant reduction from the average number of times during the summer that a Spare the Air Day is called. Spare the Air Days are declared on a county-by-county basis when air quality is expected to be unhealthy (an Air Quality Index forecast of 151 or higher). In the Valley, the primary summertime air pollutant is ozone, or smog.

From June 8 through Sept. 30, just 18 Spare the Air Days were declared in each of Fresno, Tulare and the valley portion of Kern counties, with fewer numbers of Spare the Air Days called in the remaining five counties that comprise the Air District.

County	2005	2004	2003
<i>Fresno</i>	18	11	40
<i>Kern</i>	18	27	41
<i>Kings</i>	12	10	39
<i>Madera</i>	9	5	36
<i>Merced</i>	11	5	37
<i>San Joaquin</i>	6	3	15
<i>Stanislaus</i>	9	3	15
<i>Tulare</i>	18	15	39
<i>District-wide</i>	18	27	41

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Another banner year for Spare the Air

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The Valley portion of Kern County saw a 30-percent decrease in the number of Spare the Air Days called this year. Although the number of Spare the Air Days in the remaining counties rose slightly from last year, this year's totals fell far short of the number of Spare the Air Days called in 2003.

The District attributes this second year of noticeable improvement in part to Valley residents taking to heart well-publicized Spare the Air tips, such as driving less through carpooling, taking alternate transportation and linking trips; decreasing the use of emission-forming tools such as gas-powered mowers on days when air quality is deteriorating; and making small changes in everyday behaviors.

"These two recent Spare the Air seasons illustrate the kind of improvement we can all enjoy when Valley residents work together to improve our air," said Holt.

The Valley air basin is also on the brink of meeting a federal standard for particulates ten microns and smaller, a primary source of wintertime air problems.

Spare the Air is a voluntary emission-reduction program that targets ozone formation, or smog, and is coordinated by the Air District each summer from early June through late September.

Although significant progress has been made in improving air quality in the San Joaquin Valley the past 13 years, the air basin needs to further control emissions to meet new, more demanding air-quality standards for both ozone and particulates.

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