

Ag meeting set for Tulare

Staff report

Visalia Times-Delta and Tulare Advance-Register, Wednesday, May 20, 2009

The Natural Resources Conservation Service will host a series of workshops to update farmers and ranchers about a new cost-share program to help reduce air quality emissions from off-road mobile or stationary agriculture sources over the next few weeks throughout the state.

The workshop in Tulare will be at 2 p.m. Friday, May 29, at the Tulare County Ag Commissioners Office, 4437 South Laspina St.

The cost-share program is administered by the United States Department of Agriculture as part of a new air quality provision of the 2008 Federal Farm Bill.

As part of a new program, agricultural producers can apply for cost-share funds to replace, repower, or retrofit existing combustion engines. The deadline to apply is June 26.

For more information, call 251-8468, 237-0263 or 779-1569.

GET increases bus fares

The Bakersfield Californian, Thursday, May 21, 2009

Golden Empire Transit's board hiked fares Tuesday night to cover rising costs and \$5 million in state cuts.

Some fees go up Aug.1 and stay there, some go up again Feb. 1, 2010.

Among the changes to regular fares:

- Single rides go up from 90 cents now to \$1 Aug. 1.
- Day passes go up from \$2.25 now to \$2.50 in February 2010.
- Flash passes go up from \$30 to \$32 Aug. 1 and to \$35 in February 2010.

There also are changes to senior/disabled fares. GET is also introducing a premium fare for express routes; it has an express route to the Tejon Industrial Park.

GET is looking to expand services, said spokeswoman Gina Hayden. It has 27 new buses coming by June 2010, 17 of them replacements and 10 additions. As GET gets its additional buses it will consider service additions, Hayden said.

Also planned is a study of all the district's operations to see where it should increase or decrease service.

Hayden also said the steep increase in ridership seen when gas hit \$4 a gallon has not gone back down.

The stink remains at local cheese plant

By Seth Nidever

Hanford Sentinel, Thursday, May 21, 2009

An ongoing odor problem at Marquez Brothers' Hanford plant continues to plague downwind business owners. Shopkeepers on Fourth Street first reported the stench to The Sentinel in December.

A company official said back then that the cheese manufacturer doesn't want to be a nuisance to the community. Hanford Public Works Director Lou Camara said he expected the problem to be quickly eliminated.

Five months later, a frequent foul odor is still making life miserable for Paul Bryant, owner of One Stop Sprinkler Shop, immediately downwind of the Marquez wastewater pre-treatment facility that is generating the stink.

From Bryant's parking lot, an intermittent rancid odor was apparent Tuesday morning.

Bryant said it was worse last week.

"We've just had nothing but problems," he said.

A few doors down at American Printing Co., owner Craig Maximoff said the smell is sickening one of his employees and generating complaints from customers.

"It is something that has to get fixed. It is truly affecting my business," he said.

Marquez Brothers' officials did not return multiple phone calls Tuesday seeking comment.

The problem is coming from a wastewater treatment system the company fired up in December to clean the plant's wastewater before it goes into the Hanford sewer system.

The wastewater is generated by the manufacturing process and contains milk and cheese solids that are separated out into a sludge.

The pre-treatment plant is working as far as cleaning up the wastewater, but is out of compliance with odor restrictions, Camara said Tuesday.

The company is taking several steps to end the problem, Camara said, including covering the facility's sludge compartment, enclosing the area that dehydrates the sludge, buying new sludge transport trailers and installing air filters at the site.

The changes should be complete by mid-June, he said.

"They are spending money to try to get this under control," he said.

Bryant hinted he may take further action if the problem isn't taken care of. He said his customers are being affected.

"I don't know what the next step is going to be if this thing doesn't get resolved. I haven't decided yet. We've given them plenty of time to get it straightened out," he said.

U.S. Carbon Emissions Fall by Most Since '82 Recession, Oil Prices Cited in 2008 Decline

By Steven Mufson, Washington Post Staff Writer
Washington Post, Thursday, May 21, 2009

U.S. emissions of carbon dioxide related to energy use fell 2.8 percent last year, according to an estimate by the Energy Information Administration, driven down by high oil prices and the sagging economy. The drop in carbon dioxide emissions was the steepest since 1982.

The amount of carbon dioxide produced for every dollar of economic output also declined by 3.8 percent, the federal agency said, as industry and motorists became more efficient and frugal and as renewable energy sources gained a slightly larger share of the energy market. That was far greater than the average decline in carbon intensity in previous years.

Carbon dioxide is the most prevalent of the greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change, and the EIA numbers were made public as Congress weighs complex legislation that would put a nationwide ceiling on emissions of those gases.

Environmentalists and climate experts said that the new figures shouldn't deter Congress from adopting measures to drive emissions down further. And the EIA estimated that total energy-related emissions of carbon dioxide in 2008 were still about 15.9 percent higher than in 1990, a benchmark year in international negotiations over climate regulations.

"This isn't a big shock given last year's economic downturn," said Frank O'Donnell, head of Clean Air Watch. "The real issue going forward is how to make sure emissions go down as the economy starts growing again We don't want a sick economy to be the solution to a sick planet."

Last year the economy grew at a sluggish 1.1 percent rate and total U.S. energy consumption slid by 2.2 percent.

Emissions related to the transportation use of petroleum fell a sharper 5.2 percent, largely because of record high crude oil prices, said the EIA, which is part of the Energy Department. Those prices peaked at \$147 a barrel last July before plunging later in the year, but motorists continued to pare their driving because of the economic slowdown.

Now oil prices are climbing again. Yesterday, prices for July delivery of a barrel of crude oil jumped 3.2 percent to a new six-month high of \$62.04 on the New York Mercantile Exchange after the EIA reported a one-week drop in crude oil and gasoline inventories that topped analysts' expectations.

Analysts said high prices might continue to dampen CO2 emissions from motor vehicles. Since 1990, carbon dioxide emissions from the transportation sector have climbed 21.1 percent, or 1.1 percent a year, the EIA said. But new mileage and emissions standards announced by President Obama on Tuesday are projected to slash emissions sharply by 2016.

In the electric power sector, which relies on coal for half its fuel and which is the biggest single source of carbon dioxide emissions, CO2 output fell 2.1 percent, outpacing the 1.0 percent drop in power generation. Emissions in electric power dropped most steeply -- 28.1 percent -- among the relatively small number of generators still using petroleum.

High gas prices cited in lower 2008 emissions

By H. Josef Hebert, Dina Cappiello, Associated Press

In the S.F. Chronicle, N.Y. Times and other papers, Thursday, May 21, 2009

Washington - -- There is a positive note to the country's economic woes and last summer's \$4-per-gallon gasoline: The nation in 2008 had a record decline in the amount of climate-changing carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere.

The government reported Wednesday that energy-related carbon dioxide emissions declined by 2.8 percent last year compared to 2007, the largest annual drop since the government began regular reporting of greenhouse gas pollution.

The Energy Information Administration attributed the decline to a 2.2 percent drop in energy consumption, largely because of high gasoline and diesel prices last summer and the sharp economic decline in the last half of the year.

The government figures were released as members of a House committee continued a weeklong struggle to craft a sweeping climate bill that would impose limits on carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases.

The dramatic drop in emissions last year demonstrates the effect of higher fuel costs on the pollution blamed for global warming. The premise behind the bill before Congress is that making pollution more expensive will drive down emissions. Even supporters of the bill acknowledge it will lead to higher energy prices, but greater energy efficiency, conservation and reliance on nonfossil fuels will offset much of those costs.

Carbon dioxide from the burning of fossil fuels accounts for about 80 percent of total greenhouse gas emissions. The 2008 statistics released Wednesday provide a snapshot for a single year, not an indicator of a future trend, barring congressional action. But it does demonstrate the effect energy prices have on the flow of heat-trapping emissions.

The EIA said the sharpest drop in emissions came in the transportation sector where carbon dioxide pollution fell by 5.2 percent in 2008, by far the largest decline recorded. It reflects the drop in travel caused by soaring gasoline and diesel costs last summer and the general economic decline later in the year. The largest previous drop in travel related emissions was 1.3 percent in 1991.

Emissions from the residential sector fell 1.2 percent. A colder winter caused more emissions in winter, but that was countered by a cooler summer that required less use of air conditioning, the EIA report said.

Overall, electric power companies saw emissions decline 2.1 percent. While much of that drop was economy related, some was attributed to greater use of wind turbines for electricity production.

City asks college district to halt campus field project

Mayor sends letter outlining concerns environmental requirements were not followed.

By Barbara Giasone

The Orange County Register, Thursday, May 21, 2009

FULLERTON – The City Council authorized Mayor Don Bankhead to send a letter to the North Orange County Community College District Board citing ways the district failed to comply with the city's General Plan before moving forward with the Fullerton College sports field expansion.

The council has asked the district to suspend work on the 2,000-seat field on the northeast side of the campus until an Environmental Impact Report required under the California Environmental Quality Act is completed. The letter details [air quality](#), noise, traffic and public services as areas of concern.

City Planner Heather Allen notified the district earlier in the month the city is also concerned about emergency access and the impacts to fire and police services.

The district's original EIR for a physical education complex, funded by Measure X bonds, made no mention of six light standards, a sound system and bleachers to seat 2,000 spectators.

"They're living in ivory towers and proceeded without considering the concerns of the city," Councilman Dr. Richard Jones said.

City Manager Chris Meyer said the next step is to consult with the district and legal counsel in a closed session.

Although no representatives from the college spoke, the district issued a statement on Monday that work continues construction of the field house and grading the property, for which contracts were awarded in May 2008.

The district has put the bleacher and lighting portions of the project on hold until the initial studies for the requested EIR are under way, district Public Affairs Director Christie Noring said.

Residents living near the college packed the council chambers. Representatives of the Fullerton Neighborhood Action Council said they were worried about decreased home values, lighting impacts and intense noise.

"We would like to ask the city to partner with us to commit to monitoring the college CEQA process," Action Council Chairman Ken Bane said. He said the grassroots group is working with an attorney familiar with CEQA.

Not everyone in the audience, however, was opposed to the stadium.

Mark Reichman, who grew up north of the field, read a letter from his parents, Dr. Louis and Peggy Reichman.

"We had concerns when the Fullerton Union High School stadium was built," Reichman said. "For over 30 years, there were 20 to 30 night games a year. The bother and nuisance factors were minimal and had no effect on our home value."

The Reichmanns said the college doesn't come close to the high school.

"There's ample parking, the lighting would be subdued and only 5 to 6 games would be played per year," Reichmann said. "Fullerton College athletics deserves a facility worthy of their talent and legacy."

Realtor Matt Henderson, who lives closer to the field, said he has "zero concern" that home values would be affected.

Carbon dioxide emissions drop in 2008

By H. Josef Hebert and Dina Cappiello - Associated Press Writer
in the Modesto Bee, Wednesday, May 20, 2009

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The American Clean Energy and Security Act, which is before the House Energy and Commerce Committee, calls for cutting greenhouse emissions by 17 percent over the next 11 years and by 83 percent by mid-century. The bill would base its reductions on 2005 levels and require gradual annual reductions. Initially the government also would provide emission credits to energy-intensive areas of the economy to ease any price shocks.

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The climate debate in the House committee continued Wednesday along a sharp partisan divide.

The committee's Democrats fended off repeated attempts by Republicans to kill the bill, or at least include provisions that would make it difficult to implement.

GOP lawmakers argue that the bill would result in sharp increases in energy costs that would harm consumers and the economy in general. Their amendments, defeated in party-line votes, would have linked implementation of the bill to such factors as increases in electricity rates, higher gasoline prices and unemployment levels.

Democrats argued that they have fashioned the bill in ways to blunt sharp consumer energy cost increases and to help energy-intensive industries.

[Sacramento Bee, Letters to the Editor, Thursday, May 21, 2009](#)

Emissions rules a bold step

Re "State's emissions rules are now national policy" (Page A1, May 20): President Barack Obama's move to adopt California's fuel-efficiency standards for the entire nation is a great win for us. First, it should lower the cost of cars to Californians, since we won't be an isolated market. Second, it will give the auto companies something to stop complaining about. Third, it can remind us of the 1960s and '70s, when California's pioneering efforts to clean up water, clear the air and save energy led the way for the nation and the world. Given the mess we're in now, it's great to know that our state government can still do something bold and right.

Stephanie Bradfield Cooper, Meadow Vista

National auto standards welcome

I applaud Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's unwavering commitment in fighting for California's right to regulate vehicle emissions. It is important that the governor take a stand alongside President Barack Obama to demonstrate to the public the necessity of setting a national standard on greenhouse gas emissions and fuel economy. After years of resistance from the Bush administration, these stricter national standards for automakers are long overdue.

Though there is more that can be done, Obama's plan takes the significant first steps toward establishing a much-needed federal standard. This agreement is a critical one, especially as it comes on the governor's special election day. Whether Schwarzenegger's "last-minute twist" – missing his own election to appear with the president – will prove advantageous remains to be seen; I just hope the governor flew coach to D.C.

Terren Wing, Sacramento

[Tracy Press, Letter to the Editor, Thursday, May 21, 2009](#)

Your Voice: Planes no worse than SUVs

As a licensed pilot for nearly 10 years, I find it interesting that people are so quick to suggest that area planes are a safety risk and nuisance. Pilots and the planes they fly are subject to much scrutiny by the Federal Aviation Administration.

Statistics have long shown that flying is one of the safest modes of transportation available.

Unfortunately, the same cannot be said for drivers of the many sport-utility vehicles around town, who frequently ignore and seem oblivious to local speed and traffic laws, sometimes causing serious injury or worse to people and property.

These 10,000-pound, noisy, polluting, global-warming behemoths present much more risk to the average driver, public and environmental safety than most other more fuel-efficient and practical modes of local transportation (ground, air or rail).

These drivers are often seen speaking on their cell phones, while being further oblivious to local speed and traffic laws. (Remember the hands-free cell phone law, which doesn't appear to be receiving the level of attention it should from local law enforcement?)

Rather than worry about an occasional airplane flying overhead, think about the risk to you and your family the next time you're sharing the road with these giant, ugly SUVs operated by oblivious, reckless or negligent drivers.

by Dan Kiggins, Tracy

Note: The following clip in Spanish discusses President Obama recognizes California's leadership in addressing his new national regulation against climate change. For more information on this or other Spanish clips, contact Claudia Encinas at (559) 230-5851.

Reconoce Obama liderazgo de California en nueva ley nacional contra el cambio climático

Manuel Ocaño

Noticiero Latino

Radio Bilingüe, Wednesday, May 20, 2009

El presidente Barack Obama impuso límites a los gases vehiculares que causan el cambio climático con un reconocimiento al estado de California: "El estado de California también acordó apoyar esta norma, y quiero aplaudir a California, al gobernador Schwarzenegger y a la delegación californiana por su extraordinario liderazgo" en la protección del medio ambiente, dijo el presidente.

"El objetivo de la nueva ley es establecer un norma nacional que incremente rápidamente la eficiencia vehicular", continuó el primer mandatario. La nueva ley al final es bastante similar a la A B32 de California; requiere vehículos que ofrezcan un rendimiento de hasta 35.5 millas por galón a más tardar para el año 2016; reducir en 30 por ciento las emisiones de gases que causan el cambio climático, lo equivale a retirar de circulación 177 millones de autos.

Note: The following clip in Spanish discusses actions against climate change. President Obama announced new standards that the auto industry must meet.

Contra la contaminación

Obama anunció nuevas normas para autos

Univision, Wednesday, May 20, 2009

WASHINGTON, D.C. - El presidente estadounidense Barack Obama anunció el martes normas más estrictas sobre las emisiones de gases de efecto invernadero por parte de los automóviles y el consumo de combustible, por primera vez comunes a todo Estados Unidos.

Autos limpios y más eficientes

Los nuevos estándares para combatir la contaminación obligarán a los constructores a aumentar dramáticamente la eficiencia de automóviles y vehículos utilitarios para 2016.

Obama estimó que se trata de un "acuerdo histórico", al hablar en la Casa Blanca en presencia de directores de los grandes constructores presentes en Estados Unidos, defensores del medio ambiente y responsables políticos.

"En el pasado un acuerdo como este habría sido considerado imposible", indicó Obama.

"Por eso este anuncio es tan importante, porque representa no solo un cambio de política en Washington, sino un presagio de un cambio en la forma en que se hacen los negocios en Washington", añadió.

Además, el presidente anunció que para el 2016 el consumo medio de los autos deberá ser de 42 millas o más por galón y de 26.6 millas o más por galón para camionetas y pick ups. El programa comienza con modelos fabricados en 2012.

En la actualidad, el consumo está fijado en 27.5 millas por galón para autos y 24 millas por galón para camionetas.

La medida significará que los 50 estados no podrán fijar de forma individual sus propios límites de consumo y emisiones, tal y como quería California.

Las nuevas normas permitirán unificar los estándares de consumo y emisiones contaminantes en todo el país.

Actualmente, 14 estados, entre ellos California y el Distrito de Columbia, habían reclamado al Gobierno federal que les permitiera aplicar medidas más estrictas que las existentes.

Será la primera vez que los límites sobre los gases causantes del efecto invernadero serán vinculados con los estándares federales para camiones y automóviles.

La acción de Obama también pondrá fin al litigio entre estados y fabricantes de vehículos, que han tratado de bloquear normas específicas de cada estado.

Las nuevas normas federales obligarán a los fabricantes de vehículos a cesar sus demandas. Dos empresas automotrices que han participado en los litigios, General Motors Corp. y Chrysler LLC, han recibido miles de millones de dólares en préstamos del gobierno a raíz de la grave recesión que ha debilitado la economía.