

## **A lawn mower awaits winner**

Staff reports

Stockton Record, Tuesday, Aug. 4, 2009

STOCKTON - Someone in the crowd will win a free electric lawn mower tonight as officials host a public meeting to talk about air quality.

The event runs from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Arnold Rue Community Center, 5758 Lorraine Ave.

It's one of a series of meetings held up and down the Valley this summer, said Anthony Presto, a spokesman for the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District.

The idea is to listen to residents' concerns about air quality and to share tips on small things people can do to help solve the problem, Presto said. Children are welcome.

Information: (209) 557-6400 or [www.healthyairliving.com](http://www.healthyairliving.com).

## **Aug. 6: Air Quality Chat will be held at Westside Union Elementary Gymnasium from 6 to 8 p.m.**

OurLosBanos.com, August calendar

The 2009 Healthy Air Living Chats are FREE, two-hour, evening events geared at bringing Valley residents together to learn about the simple things we all can do to improve air quality in the Valley. The 2009 Chats will bring new ideas, innovative tools and great opportunities for you and your community.

Children are welcome and light refreshments will be provided.

## **Valley residents take up 'clunkers' call**

By Robert Rodriguez / The Fresno Bee

Sat., Aug. 1, 2009

Bill Skuban and Nora Chapman know a good deal when they see it.

That's why the Fresno couple were busy shopping for a new car Saturday, taking advantage of the national "cash for clunkers" rebate program.

Chapman hadn't thought about replacing her 1999 Dodge Durango until the government rolled out the program, which encourages drivers to give up their gas guzzlers and buy new vehicles with rebates of \$3,500 to \$4,500.

Although the program burned through its \$1 billion funding in a week, the White House pledged to honor car deals through the weekend as it tries to wrangle \$2 billion more from Congress.

That was good news for Chapman, whose Durango was only valued at about \$3,000. She expected to qualify for the \$4,500 rebate and was looking at a Subaru Forester.

This has really pushed me into the buying mode," Chapman said. "This is really a dream come true."

Several Valley car dealers said the rebate program seems to be a lure for customers who hadn't already been thinking about buying a new car.

"As far as I am concerned, this has done more to stimulate the economy in the last five days than anything else," said Frank Perez, general manager of Herwaldt Subaru. As of Saturday afternoon, the dealership had sold at least nine cars as part of the program.

At Selma Honda, the dealership's sales staff has been working long hours. "We were here until midnight last night and the day before that we were here until 1:30 in the morning," said Tony Acevedo, general sales manager at Selma Honda. "This program has been driving a lot of traffic into our store. We haven't been this busy in 10 months."

As of Saturday, the dealership had sold 27 cars through the rebate program. Overall, the sales of its Civic and Accord models have increased by at least 10%, he said.

"I have a feeling we are going to have another late night again as people try to take advantage of the program before the weekend" ends, Acevedo said. "There is still a sense of urgency out there."

While the White House has assured car dealers -- whose sales have suffered because of the economy -- that the program would run through the weekend, it made no promises beyond that.

The House of Representatives voted Friday to pour \$2 billion more into the program. The Senate is expected to take up the issue this week.

Manuel Castro of Selma has been waiting for the right time to trade up from his 1987 Chevy pickup to a 2009 model.

"I saw on the news the other night that I could get \$4,500 for my truck, so I decided now was the time to get that truck," Castro said.

### **Local briefs: Prescribed blaze to be set in national park**

Staff reports

Fresno Bee, Sunday, Aug. 2, 2009

Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks announced plans to complete a prescribed fire in the Crescent Meadows area on Tuesday, weather and air quality conditions permitting.

The 42-acre area is in the Giant Forest in Sequoia National Park and should take one day to complete. Visitors should expect to see smoke in the area. The fire also will close some trails.

### **Public comment on Miraflores housing plan extended to Aug. 12**

By Katherine Tam, staff writer

Contra Costa Times and Tri-Valley Herald, Tuesday, Aug. 4, 2009

RICHMOND — The public now has until Aug. 12 to comment on the draft environmental impact report for the Miraflores housing project.

The city's redevelopment agency wants to build up to 336 affordable and market-rate housing units on 14 acres bounded by South 45th Street to the west, Wall Avenue to the south, Interstate 80 to the east and the BART tracks to the north. The complex would hold 971 residents.

The land had been the site of three Japanese nurseries born before World War II. Building houses there requires a general plan amendment from low density residential/preservation/resource areas to medium density residential, and rezoning the land from single-family low density residential/exclusive agriculture to planned area.

The comment period on the draft EIR has been extended. The document is available at the Richmond Main Library, 325 Civic Center Plaza; Westside branch in Point Richmond, 135 Washington Ave.; or online at [www.ci.richmond.ca.us/planning](http://www.ci.richmond.ca.us/planning).

The draft EIR found the plan could mean significant impacts in air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, geology, water quality and noise. The report also lists mitigation measures.

[Washington Post commentary, Tuesday, August 4, 2009:](#)

## **The EPA Yields the Floor to . . . Whoever Wants It**

By Dana Milbank

It's August in the capital, which means that pretty much everybody who lives or works here has fled the place. Members of the House have returned to their districts, senators will soon follow, and the president will be off to Martha's Vineyard.

But the bureaucrats of the Environmental Protection Agency, God bless 'em, continue to do the people's business. On Monday, they held a public hearing on an EPA proposal to improve [air-quality standards](#); it was the federal government's equivalent of a tree falling in the woods.

In a conference room in Arlington, four EPA officials agreed to sit and listen for nine hours, allotting five-minute speaking slots for as many as 108 citizens who wished to get something off their chests about nitrogen dioxide. But only 24 people signed up for their five minutes of fame.

"I'm really just a middle-aged, bicycle-riding accountant," testified one of them, Paul d'Eustachio from Takoma Park. "But I do possess a remarkably sensitive instrument for testing air quality, and that's my lungs." He gave a sample reading from this instrument: "I can't tell you how many parts per billion that I'm actually breathing, but my lungs will tell you that whatever it is, it's way, way, way, way, way too much."

The moderator asked her EPA colleagues: "Do you have any questions for Mr. D'Eustachio?" The three of them answered with a polite "no."

"I'm also a bicyclist," testified Kenton Pattie of Falls Church. "I've been racing for many, many years." Further, he said, "I swam this morning for an hour and a half right next to the Beltway, off of Braddock Road." Pattie presented some surprising evidence to the officials: "Studies that show the IQ score has gone down as a result of -- by four points for children who were exposed to nitrogen dioxide."

"Do you have a reference for that?" asked the moderator, Rosalina Rodriguez.

"I may have to look it up," Pattie answered.

"Was it specifically NO<sub>2</sub> or was it all traffic pollution?" asked David Orlin, an EPA lawyer.

"I can't answer that, not for sure," the witness replied. "I found this off the Internet."

The officials took notes.

Participation would have been even lighter if the American Lung Association hadn't chosen to flood the zone. Of the 24 speakers, 14 were chapter heads, volunteers, low-level staff members or top officials with the association -- and each delivered roughly the same talking points: that the EPA proposal is too lenient.

Kenneth Lawrence, representing the ALA, spoke about the heavy traffic on "a stretch of about a mile or so between Nutley Road and Cedar Lane." Janice Nolen, policy director of the ALA, spoke of her late grandmother, who lived close to a highway. The ALA's Heather Grzelka spoke of her stepdaughter. The ALA's Jen Westrate spoke of her not-yet-conceived children. "Next year I'm getting married, and I plan to have children," she said. "I don't want to put them at risk for having stunted lung growth."

By 10:30 a.m., there were no more members of the association, or the public, waiting to comment. "I just want to make sure nobody else is registered," Rodriguez said before calling a

recess. She got a couple more speakers after the recess, but then had to try to drum up interest. "Anyone that was not planning to make a statement but would like to do one -- you're welcome to register outside," she said, before calling another recess.

Opponents of the EPA proposal had a particularly difficult time mustering energy for the debate. Only four representatives signed up to air objections -- not counting the one from the utilities industry who watched the proceedings in silence.

"There is no scientific justification for a new NO<sub>2</sub> standard in the range EPA proposed," declared Howard Feldman from the American Petroleum Institute. As Feldman exceeded his five minutes, going on about an "adverse effect on the response to an airway challenge," the EPA's Lew Weinstock made a wrap-it-up gesture.

Outnumbered 5 to 1 on the list of speakers, Feldman and the other industry representatives were unpopular. The next witness after Feldman, pulmonologist Thomas Smirniotopoulos, began by insulting him. "I was expecting a lung association person sitting next to me, not a member of the MOD Squad," he said, referring to the "merchants of death" lobbyists from the novel "Thank You for Smoking."

Attendance was so sparse for industry that it brought in a mercenary: toxicologist Mara Seeley. "Although the American Petroleum Institute sponsored my appearance here," she testified, "the views that I'm going to be expressing here are my own and they don't necessarily reflect API's views." Conveniently enough, they did reflect API's views.

A few minutes after Seeley spoke, a recess was called for lack of speakers. During the break, another man from the American Lung Association, Kevin Stewart, walked to the sign-in table. "You want to speak now?" asked an EPA official, hurrying him to the witness table.

The hearing was returned to order, and the moderator announced that Stewart would be given an extra two minutes at the microphone. She could afford to be generous: It's August.

[Manteca Bulletin commentary, Aug. 2, 2009:](#)

### **Moooo-ving on to another vote on air quality rep**

By Dennis Wyatt, Managing Editor

Manteca's elected leaders Tuesday are expected to cast a collective vote for a Stockton City Council member they feel will best serve the interests of dairy farmers on the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District board.

Manteca – along with other San Joaquin-Stanislaus city councils and county supervisors – last month refused to support Stockton Councilmember Susan Talamantes Eggman from assuming the position on the belief that she is unsympathetic to the plight of the dairy industry.

The representative this year must come from the Stockton City Council. Two other Stockton leaders have stepped up for consideration. They are Stockton Mayor Ann Johnston who has been a retail business owner for the past 28 years as well as growing up on a farm and having family vested in agriculture for 65 years plus Elbert Holman Sr. He has 34 years of experience in law enforcement. Holman has indicated he doesn't favor any strategies that will disrupt the prosperity generated by agriculture.

The Manteca council's concern centers around a movement within the air pollution control district to force dairy farmers to reduce methane gas which is essentially cow flatulence. Manteca's leaders noted that dairies top the San Joaquin County's annual farm production of \$2 billion at \$446 million.

Dairy farms are being plummeted by the global recession that has triggered a massive drop in demand for milk and other dairy products. As a result, it now costs California dairy farmers \$1.50 a gallon to produce milk while they are receiving right around \$1 a gallon.

Dairies have been the leader in ag production in San Joaquin County since 2001. Farm-related jobs including processing and trucking are by far the largest segment of employment in San Joaquin County.

The district has focused on methane releases from the San Joaquin Valley's two million dairy cows as being a major factor in poor air quality.

Studies have shown that an average dairy cow produces 12.8 pounds of volatile organic compounds (VOC) a year. That would mean 700 cows produce as much VOCs as 60,000 cars.

One solution would involve a million dollar investment per dairy for methane digesters that cover a dairy's lagoon. Such a digester would trap pollutants and create electricity. There is a major debate whether they would be cost effective for the typical dairy.

The San Joaquin Valley Air Quality Control District - the people who made dairy cattle public enemy No. 1 for cutting a bit too much cheese and creating methane gas - are also going after steakhouses and fast food joints that charbroil meat. That dripping grease ends up sizzling and sparking a flame that spews smoke containing dangerous pollutants that escape into the atmosphere.

Throughout the San Joaquin Valley, the air quality folks estimate 2.6 tons of particles are released into the air each day from charbroiling. Altogether, 527 tons of pollutants that are considered lethal are released daily into the skies of the San Joaquin Valley.

The air quality people have a simple solution – technology. Of course, that means money. The proposed new rule – which could cost between \$2,000 and \$100,000 a year per restaurant.

[Note: The following clip in Spanish discusses California's need to prepare itself for climate change. In the case that the entire world is able to reduce their emissions in the future, California will need to start preparing itself for an increase in sea level, high temperatures and other climate change effects. For more information on this or other Spanish clips, contact Claudia Encinas at \(559\) 230-5851.](#)

### **Informe: California debe prepararse para cambio en el clima**

Por Samantha Young

The Associated Press

El Nuevo Herald and Opinion, Monday, August 3, 2009

SACRAMENTO, California, EE.UU. -- Aun en el caso de que el mundo logre reducir sus emisiones de carbono en el futuro, California necesita comenzar a prepararse para un incremento en el nivel del mar, un clima más caliente y otros efectos del cambio climático, según un nuevo informe del gobierno estatal.

El documento exhorta a las comunidades del estado a repensar el desarrollo de construcciones en las zonas costeras de baja altura, a reforzar los diques que protegen áreas propensas a inundaciones y a conservar la ya reducida provisión de agua.

"Aún nos tenemos que adaptar, no importa lo que hagamos, debido a la naturaleza de los gases que generan el efecto invernadero", dijo Tony Brunello, subsecretario de cambio climático y energía en la

Agencia de Recursos Naturales de California, quien ayudó a preparar el informe. "Estos gases seguirán en la atmósfera por los próximos cien años".

El informe en borrador, que el lunes será dado a conocer por la agencia, brinda el primer plan integral del estado para trabajar con gobiernos locales, universidades y la población con el fin de lidiar con el cambio climático. Se espera un plan final para antes de fin de año, luego de que el público brinde sus puntos de vista.

El informe fue compilado después que el gobernador Arnold Schwarzenegger ordenó en noviembre a las agencias estatales que crearan una estrategia climática para el estado. El documento llega tres años después de que el republicano firmara una histórica ley sobre calentamiento global que obliga a California a reducir para 2020 sus emisiones de gases que generan el efecto invernadero.

La mayoría de los países se han concentrado en la reducción futura de esos gases, pero los investigadores dicen que esas iniciativas tardarán décadas en tener un efecto, y mientras tanto el planeta se sigue calentando. Los gobiernos estatales comenzaron hace poco a estudiar posibles medidas para reducir el daño que causarán el alza en los niveles del mar, las inundaciones por tormentas, las sequías y la escasez de agua.

En el último siglo en California, el mar ha subido casi 18 centímetros (siete pulgadas), las temperaturas promedio han aumentado, la nieve se derrite antes cada año, los días son más calientes y hay menos noches frías.

El aumento de las temperaturas durante las próximas décadas llevará a más olas de calor, incendios forestales, sequías e inundaciones, dice el informe.

"Tenemos que lidiar con estos efectos inevitables", dijo Suzanne Moser, investigadora del Instituto de Ciencias Marinas en la Universidad de California en su plantel Santa Cruz. "No podemos pretender que no van a suceder, y nos tenemos que preparar para eso".

[Note: The following clip in Spanish discusses authorities and experts opposition to the air quality measures proposed by President Calderon. Their objection is that there is not enough clean fuel or renewable energy capacity to meet the proposed measures.](#)

### **Sin futuro, renovación vehicular**

**Autoridades y expertos opinan que la propuesta de Felipe Calderón se contrapone a los objetivos de mejorar el aire al incentivar el uso del automóvil, cuando en México no hay combustibles limpios ni los fabricantes producen unidades con mayor rendimiento**

Por Edith Martínez

El Universal, Sunday, August 2, 2009

La sustitución de vehículos viejos por modelos recientes que promueve el gobierno federal tendrá poco impacto para mejorar el medio ambiente del país y sobre todo, el de la Zona Metropolitana del Valle de México.

Especialistas en transporte, movilidad y medio ambiente aseguran que este programa es deficiente y se contrapone con los objetivos de mejorar la calidad del aire, pues promueve el uso del automóvil cuando se carece de combustibles limpios, infraestructura vial y una norma que obligue a las automotrices a construir vehículos de mayor rendimiento.

Según un estudio de la Iniciativa de Aire Limpio, creada por el Banco Mundial para los temas de calidad del aire en América Latina, sólo en el estado de México y el Distrito Federal circulan un millón 349 mil 968 carros modelos anteriores a 1996.

El 15 de julio, el presidente Felipe Calderón anunció el lanzamiento del Programa de Renovación Vehicular para fortalecer el mercado interno, apoyar al sector automotriz y proteger el medio ambiente.

Con una inversión de 500 millones de pesos, se financiará a 33 mil propietarios de autos con más de 10 años de antigüedad, con 15 mil pesos para el enganche de un carro nuevo, pero tendrán que chatarrizar el viejo.

El programa beneficiará a 33 mil propietarios de autos en todo el país, casi 2.5% de las unidades con más de 10 años de antigüedad que circulan en el Distrito Federal y el estado de México. En

la ciudad de México se sustituyeron 35 mil taxis con más de 10 años de antigüedad en 12 meses, la inversión fue de 15 mil millones de pesos.

### **“De eso a nada, pues eso”**

La secretaria de Medio Ambiente de la ciudad de México, Martha Delgado, consideró que el programa de sustitución vehicular es un “buen inicio, pero insuficiente. De eso a nada, pues eso”. Con ella coincidieron el director general para México del Instituto de Políticas para el Transporte y el Desarrollo (ITDP, por sus siglas en inglés), Bernardo Baranda y la directora del programa Aire y Energía, del Centro Mexicano de Derecho Ambiental (CEMDA), Tania Mijares.

Ambos dijeron que cualquier esfuerzo por modernizar el parque vehicular es favorable para el mejoramiento de la calidad del aire.

El argumento es que los autos viejos contaminan más. Los modelos anteriores a 1990 carecen de tecnologías de control de emisiones contaminantes y generan 5.9 veces más monóxido de carbono; 2.4 proporciones extras de óxidos de nitrógeno y 2.7 veces de hidrocarburos, a diferencia de los autos modelo 1991, que tienen convertidores catalíticos.

Tania Mijares opinó que se deben hacer estos programas en forma integral para que su efecto ambiental no se quede “en buenas intenciones” que fomentan el automóvil.

### **La flota va en aumento**

Bernardo Baranda agregó que “no se trata de cambiar por cambiar, porque a la larga podemos padecer las consecuencias de eso”.

Explicó que por años, el automóvil ha regido las políticas públicas del país y las grandes ciudades como el Distrito Federal, en detrimento de la calidad de vida y la movilidad. El crecimiento de la flota vehicular de la zona metropolitana se ha duplicado en los últimos 16 años. La dirección general de Gestión de la Calidad del Aire de la Secretaría del Medio Ambiente del DF señala que en 1990 existían 2 millones 40 mil 601 automotores, para el 2006 esa cifra se incrementó a 4 millones 33 mil 873 vehículos, casi 50%.

Datos del ITDP indican que las vialidades nunca crecerán tan rápido como la cantidad de autos. En los últimos cinco años las calles y avenidas de la ciudad de México aumentaron 16%, mientras que los carros lo hicieron en 40%. A este paso, para 2020 habrá 6.8 millones de vehículos en circulación en la zona metropolitana.

### **Combustibles limpios**

La falta de combustibles limpios y una norma nacional de eficiencia vehicular limitan el impacto ambiental que pudiera tener la sustitución de los vehículos viejos.

La directora del programa Aire y Energía del Centro Mexicano de Derecho Ambiental (CEMDA), Tania Mijares, dijo que el gobierno federal “está dejando pasar una oportunidad de oro para demostrarle al mundo que su compromiso con el cambio climático es serio”. Dijo que el primer paso es modernizar el parque vehicular; sin embargo, hay que pensar en los combustibles que usarán.

México tiene la Norma Oficial 086 de especificaciones para protección ambiental que deben reunir los combustibles fósiles líquidos y gaseosos que usan las fuentes fijas y móviles, pero no se cumplen.

Petróleos Mexicanos (Pemex) estaba obligado a introducir combustibles más limpios desde 2008, en el caso de las gasolinas, y en enero de 2009 debía distribuir diesel de Ultra Bajo Azufre (UBA) en las zonas metropolitanas del DF, Guadalajara y Monterrey; sin embargo, hasta la fecha no ha cumplido.

Un estudio del Centro Mario Molina sobre costos y beneficios de la introducción de combustibles limpios destaca la necesidad de mejorar la calidad de las gasolinas y el diesel para que en México puedan utilizarse vehículos equipados con nuevos sistemas de control de emisiones.

Estos autos ya se fabrican en México y son exportados a países que tienen combustibles "limpios". Estos vehículos emiten menos contaminantes que los autos nuevos que se venden en el país.

Para autos particulares a gasolina la reducción es de seis veces en hidrocarburos y de 14 veces en óxidos de nitrógeno, principales precursores del ozono en la ciudad de México.

El aumento del parque vehicular en la Zona Metropolitana del Valle de México va aunado a un mayor consumo de combustibles. En 1990 se consumieron 16.6 millones de litros de gasolina y 4.4 millones de diesel, para el 2006, esa cantidad incrementó, de gasolina se registraron 21 millones de litros, mientras que de diesel 6.2 millones de litros.

### **Regular la eficiencia vehicular**

Ante este panorama, organizaciones civiles urgieron al gobierno federal con la finalidad de crear una norma para las automotrices a fin de que haya vehículos más eficientes.

El director para México del ITDP, Bernardo Baranda, señaló que mientras no sea obligatorio comercializar autos con mayor rendimiento por litro de gasolina, la sustitución de vehículos "queda coja".

Tania Mijares, del programa Aire y Energía del CEMDA, lamentó que la industria automotriz sea "mimada" y las autoridades teman exigirles autos menos contaminantes.

"Es absurdo que tengan dos líneas de producción, una de autos eficientes para exportar y otra sin esas tecnologías para vender en México", indicó.

La Asociación Mexicana de la Industria Automotriz (AMIA) dijo que este tema aún no está a discusión. El 6 de agosto, la AMIA dará a conocer las empresas y autos que entrarán al programa. Otro tema pendiente para mejorar la calidad del aire en el país, según Martha Delgado, es la ampliación de la verificación vehicular al transporte de carga.