

## **Valley air district offers hybrid voucher training**

The Business Journal, Wed., 23 Dec. 2009

The [San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District](#) will host a training session in January for a program designed to spur the purchase of hybrid trucks and buses.

The training, to be held at the air district's Fresno office located at 1990 E. Gettysburg Ave., will provide information and instruction on the California Hybrid Truck and Bus Voucher Incentive Project (HVIP) sponsored by the California Air Resources Board (CARB).

The project will introduce \$20 million in vouchers at the end of January to speed the market introduction of low-emitting hybrid trucks and buses that reduce greenhouse gases by operating on a combined system of electric propulsion and gasoline combustion.

The vouchers will range from \$10,000 to \$45,000 and each fleet is limited to a maximum of 100 vouchers.

HVIP is managed by CALSTART, which will host the trainings to help dealers and fleets prepare voucher requests. Fresno's training will take place on January 13 from 1:30 to 3 p.m. Additional information can be found at [www.californiahvip.org](http://www.californiahvip.org).

## **Pacific Ethanol hopes to restart Valley plants**

The Valley Voice, Thurs., Dec. 24, 2009

Pacific Ethanol hopes to restart Valley ethanol plants. A bankruptcy judge approved a plan to reopen a shuttered 60-million-gallon Pacific Ethanol plant in Burley, Idaho last week as margins in the industry have improved. The biofuel plant should be up and running at full capacity as soon as a month, CEO Neil Koehler said. Neil's brother, Paul Koehler, told the Voice the company is "hopeful" it can reopen the closed ethanol plants in the San Joaquin Valley in Madera and Stockton through the Chapter 11 bankruptcy process too. Koehler says the spread between the cost of corn and the end price of ethanol has improved, allowing many mothballed plants across the nation to reopen or be sold off and restarted. Separately, AE Biofuels said earlier this month it has leased the Cilion Inc. ethanol plant in Keyes and plans to reopen it after a \$1.6 million repair and a \$1 million contribution by the original contractor for the 55-million-gallon plant. AE Biofuels says it will employ cellulosic techniques at the corn-based plant when it restarts in the first quarter of 2010. Demand in California is expected to rise in 2010 with the blend of ethanol to gasoline increasing to 10% from 5.7%, taking expected demand to 1.5 billion gallons annually. First to reopen in the state was Calgren Renewable Fuels in Tipton last summer.

## **Avenal Energy Project Approved**

The Valley Voice, Thurs., Dec. 24, 2009

Construction of the 600-megawatt Avenal Energy Project in the city of Avenal won approval last week from the California Energy Commission. The project will produce a nominal electrical power output of 600 MW for delivery to California's grid system using natural gas. Construction is expected to begin in April and should be completed in approximately 27 months. Initial plant start-up is scheduled for October 2011, with commercial operation expected in June 2012. The project by Avenal Power Center, LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Macquarie Energy North America Trading, Inc of Houston, would be built on 25 acres of a 148-acre site that is just south of the Fresno County line and about two miles east of Interstate 5.

## **Burning rule may snuff Christmas fire tradition**

By Denis Cuff, Staff Writer

Contra Costa Times & Tri-Valley Herald, Wed., Dec. 23, 2009

Be merry on Christmas, but snuff the yule log.

A Spare the Air alert banning fires at home is likely Friday in the nine Bay Area counties, pollution regulators said Wednesday.

Thanksgiving last month also was a no-burn day, but the ban burned those who wanted nostalgic holiday fires. People with asthma and other respiratory ailments cheered throatily.

The burn or no burn ruling will be announced about 1 p.m. today by the Bay Area Air Quality Management, which last year banned burning wood in fireplaces and stoves on bad-air nights.

For this Christmas, forecasters predict cold, still air that traps toxic smoke near the ground.

"It's not that the weather is bad. It's that the weather is bad for concentrating fine particulates," said Lisa Fasano, an air district spokeswoman. "You can have clear skies, and unhealthy particulate buildups."

The pollution district posts its daily burn decisions on its Web site at [www.sparetheair.org](http://www.sparetheair.org).

Bay Area residents can sign up for automatic Spare the Air alerts at [www.sparetheair.org](http://www.sparetheair.org), or by phone at 800-430-1515.

If fireplaces go cold, people can legally burn candles in their hearths or watch the annual Christmas Eve and Day broadcasts of the yule log on KOFY-TV.

A video clip of the yule log can be viewed at [www.kofytv.com/](http://www.kofytv.com/).

"You can see the flames without getting the soot particles," Fasano said. "It's cleaner."

### **L.A.-area air pollution could dip from new EPA rule on ships The agency has finalized standards to reduce air pollution from U.S.-flagged oil tankers and cargo vessels by 80%. The standards will take effect by 2015.**

By Louis Sahagun, Staff Writer  
LA Times, Wed., Dec. 23, 2009

**Air pollution** from U.S.-flagged oil tankers and cargo vessels will be reduced by about 80% under new engine and fuel standards finalized Tuesday by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, a move that could improve Los Angeles' air quality.

The new standards, however, will apply only to existing U.S.-flagged ships, which account for about 10% of the vessels that visit U.S. ports each year. The vast majority of the estimated 6,000 large ships that berth annually at the Los Angeles-Long Beach port complex are foreign-flagged.

Large marine vessels, which burn dirty, heavy fuel oil, are linked to about 800 premature deaths in the Southern California region each year, according to state authorities.

The standards will take effect by 2015.

Still pending are international regulations to reduce diesel emissions from large, oceangoing vessels within 200 nautical miles of U.S. and Canadian coasts. The International Maritime Organization is slated to pass its rules, expected to be similar to those of the EPA, in March.

"Port communities have identified diesel emissions as one of the greatest health threats facing their people -- especially their children," EPA Administrator Lisa P. Jackson said in a statement. "These new rules mark a step forward in cutting dangerous pollution in the air we breathe and reducing the harm to our health, our environment, and our economy."

Port officials familiar with the EPA announcement were not available for comment Tuesday.

The new emissions standards were prompted by a series of lawsuits brought against the EPA by environmental groups led by Earthjustice.

"For 10 years, we've been trying to compel the EPA through the courts to get this source of pollution cleaned up," Sarah Burt, an attorney with Earthjustice, said Tuesday. "Today, the EPA has taken a good step in the right direction."

David Pettit, a senior attorney with the Natural Resources Defense Council, agreed. "It shows the U.S. is serious about reducing the sulfur content in fuels used by large ships," he said.

By 2030, EPA officials said, the domestic and international strategy is expected to prevent between 12,000 and 31,000 premature deaths and 1.4 million lost workdays. The estimated annual health benefits in 2030 as a result of reduced air pollution are valued between \$110 billion and \$270 billion, nearly 90 times the projected cost of \$3.1 billion to achieve those results.

### **Lawsuit over New York carbon auction settled**

San Francisco Chronicle, Thursday, December 24, 2009

Albany, N.Y. (AP) --New York officials have settled a lawsuit with power plant owners that challenged their legal authority to auction allowances required for [carbon dioxide emissions](#).

Under the settlement with Indeck Corinth, the Department of Environmental Conservation will maintain at least 1.5 million allowances annually available to power plant operators with long-term contracts.

Indeck has a contract with Consolidated Edison Inc., which is agreeing to buy any additional allowances Indeck needs for its gas-fired generator.

The New York State Energy and Research Development Authority will use proceeds from the carbon auction to benefit ConEd customers.

The settlement includes Brooklyn Navy Yard Cogeneration Partners and Selkirk Cogen Partners.

### **States Settle With Plant Polluting Region's Air**

By Mireya Navarro, Staff Writer  
NY Times, Wed., Dec. 23, 2009

[Air quality](#) in the New York tri-state region stands to benefit from a court settlement requiring Duke Energy, one of the nation's largest electric power companies, to drastically cut sulfur dioxide emissions from a coal-fired plant in Indiana, state and federal officials said Tuesday.

New York, New Jersey and Connecticut joined the federal government and two environmental groups in a 1999 lawsuit over pollution from the Duke plant, the 560-megawatt Gallagher Station, which blows eastward and brings smog and soot to the Adirondacks and other areas.

Under the terms of the settlement, filed Tuesday in United States District Court for the Southern District of Indiana, Duke Energy commits itself to spending about \$80 million to switch to natural gas as fuel in two of the plant's units and installing the latest pollution control technology in two other units. A 30-day comment period remains before the settlement becomes official.

Federal officials said the measures are expected to reduce sulfur dioxide emissions by 86 percent from last year at Duke.

The company is also expected to pay a \$1.75 million civil penalty and spend \$6.25 million on environmental projects, including \$1 million in the New York region.

"The main significance of this settlement is that New York will get cleaner air," said Katherine Kennedy, special deputy state attorney general for environmental protection in New York. "A large power plant is spending a lot of money to clean up its act and provide mitigation."

In a statement, Jim Turner, president and chief operating officer of Duke Energy's franchised electric and gas business, called the agreement "a reasonable settlement that resolves some longstanding issues, advances our two-decades long effort to improve air quality in the region, and positions us to comply with increasingly stringent environmental regulations."

The settlement is the latest among more than a dozen such agreements resulting from violations of the Clean Air Act that the Environmental Protection Agency and some states have pursued against power plants over the last decade.

The E.P.A. says that sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides, another pollutant to be reined in by Duke Energy under the settlement, are significant contributors to acid rain, smog and haze. The pollutants, which can travel significant distances downwind, become fine particles or particulate

matter that can lodge deep in the lungs and cause health problems and even death, the agency says.

In a 2007 report, the Environmental Integrity Project, a legal advocacy group, found the Gallagher plant to be the dirtiest in the nation in terms of sulfur dioxide emissions. It said it generated just over 40 pounds of sulfur dioxide per megawatt-hour of electricity, about double the average among the nation's 50 top-polluting plants.

Angeline Protogere, a spokeswoman for Duke Energy, said it had invested more than \$100 million on pollution controls since then.

Correction: December 23, 2009

An earlier version of this article had an incorrect figure for the amount of money invested by Duke Energy in pollution controls, according to a spokeswoman. It is \$100 million, not \$100.