

## Smog, car repair event fills early

Stockton Record, Thursday, December 6, 2012

STOCKTON - An event allowing motorists to get free smog checks and repairs reached capacity before it even started, officials said.

Tune In & Tune Up began at 9 a.m. Saturday, but motorists were waiting in line at the San Joaquin County Fairgrounds as early as 11 p.m. Friday, said Tom Knox, a spokesman for event sponsor Valley Clean Air Now.

"We were full by 8:30 a.m." Saturday, he said.

By day's end, 540 cars had been tested. Of those cars, 278 failed the smog test. Owners of those cars received vouchers for as much as \$500 in repairs.

If you missed it, stay tuned. Event organizers plan to return to Stockton two or three times in 2013.

## Tulare County student's art featured in calendar

By David Castellon

Visalia Times-Delta Thurs., Dec. 6, 2012

The artistic talents of students from three Tulare County schools are being featured in the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District's latest calendar.

The 2013 Healthy Air Living Kids' Calendar features the artwork of 15 Valley youths, with each picture illustrating a clean-air message.

Calendars will be distributed to schools, community groups, healthcare facilities, churches, civic organizations and non-profit groups across the Valley.

The Tulare County youths whose artwork was chosen to be included are:

- June — Cesar Andrade, an 11th grader at Woodlake Union High School.

*(Andrade's artwork, shown below, is featured in this news article.)*



- August — Daisy Ortiz, a 5th grader at Tipton Elementary School.
- December — Arieana Gutierrez, a 1st grader at Mission Valley Elementary School, Tulare. Calendars can be reserved by emailing the air district at [public.education@valleyair.org](mailto:public.education@valleyair.org).

## Study: Life expectancy rises as fine particle air pollution drops

Associated Press

In the Lodi News-Sentinel, Wednesday, Dec. 5, 2012

LOS ANGELES — A new study links even small reductions in fine particle air pollution to increased life expectancy.

Researchers who compared data from 545 counties across the U.S. found that a drop in fine particulate matter, known as PM2.5, between 2000 and 2007 corresponded with an average rise in life expectancy of 0.35 of a year.

The study, led by researchers at the Harvard School of Public Health, is described as the largest to date to find public health benefits from ongoing reductions in U.S. air pollution levels.

Fine particles, which are about 1/30th the average width of a human hair, come from a variety of sources, including vehicles, smokestacks and fires. They also form when gases emitted by power plants, industry and vehicle engines react in the atmosphere.

The tiny particles can lodge deeply in the lungs, aggravating heart and lung diseases. Those most at risk include people who are active outdoors, children and the elderly.

Nationally, average concentrations of particulate matter, both fine and coarse, have fallen over the years. The researchers wanted to know whether the relatively smaller decreases in PM2.5 levels since 2000 are still improving life expectancy.

The study, which appeared in Monday's online edition of the journal *Epidemiology*, controlled for changes in other factors, such as smoking and socioeconomic status. The findings showed that cutting fine particle pollution had the greatest effect on life expectancy in urban areas — possibly because of differences in particle composition. Women also seemed to benefit more than men.

"This study provides strong and compelling evidence that continuing to reduce ambient levels of PM2.5 prolongs life," said co-author Francesca Dominici, professor of biostatistics at the Harvard School of Public Health.

Citing scientific evidence that exposure to particle pollution causes premature death and is linked to a variety of significant health problems, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has proposed strengthening air pollution standards for fine particles.

## **San Joaquin Auto Repair Vouchers Intended to Reduce Pollution**

**Drivers in the San Joaquin Valley whose cars can't pass the smog test can get some free help.**

By Rich Ibarra

Capital Public Radio, Thursday, Nov. 29, 2012

The "Tune In and Tune Up" program comes to the fairgrounds in Stockton tomorrow. You can have your car smog tested free of charge.

Anthony Presto with the San Joaquin Valley Air District says the program is designed to get gross polluters off the road. He says one of every two cars tested is expected to fail.

PRESTO: "And if it fails, they will be issued a voucher and have repairs done, up to \$500 so that the vehicle will pass their smog check."

The Air District funds the program with DMV fees, and Presto says repeated surveys indicate San Joaquin Valley's bad air is second only to Los Angeles.

PRESTO: There's a lot of negative effects and the biggest negative effect is the public health, so we're trying to do everything we can to protect public health by having programs like this."

The program is only for people who live in the San Joaquin Valley, which stretches from San Joaquin to Kern County.

*To hear this story on Capital Public Radio, go to: <http://www.cpradio.org/180469>.*

Fresno Bee column, Wed., Dec. 5, 2012:

## **Regional planning likely on its way here**

By Bill McEwen

The subject is serious, but the latest twist in the saga of the proposed Rio Mesa project area is worth a belly laugh. So go ahead and laugh until your ribs hurt or you fall off the couch.

The thought of the city of Fresno suing Madera County -- or any other neighboring county -- for failure to adequately study the consequences of growth is akin to Charlie Sheen testifying about the ills of doing drugs and shacking up with porn stars.

Fresno is a monument to poor planning, urban sprawl and concentrated poverty. Now, having recognized the errors of its ways, the city has morphed into the ex-smoker complaining when someone else lights up.

Thickening the hypocrisy: the closed-session decision authorizing the city attorney to sue Madera County was made by a City Council dominated by touters of free-market virtues.

The city does have a legitimate point. It says that big projects such as Rio Mesa, which 100,000 people would someday call home, require regional planning.

But our local governments aren't much for collaboration. It's always about getting while the getting is good regardless of what happens to the guys and gals on the other side of the line or the river.

Considering the San Joaquin Valley's challenges with air quality, water scarcity and poverty, you'd think that leaders would wise up and team up.

The problem is, Fresno -- the 800-pound gorilla that anchors the Valley -- surrendered its moral authority one rezoned at a time when it was pushing north with reckless abandon and ignoring the deterioration of its urban core.

Maybe Fresno someday will reclaim the mantle to lead by successfully implementing its 2035 general plan and rebuilding its neighborhoods.

This is a big maybe. The attempted derailment of the Southeast Growth Area plan by council members, the continuing rezones and the failure to untangle the planning knot west of Highway 99 suggests that Fresno may never abandon its build-and-abandon growth pattern.

The difference between today and the past is a fear at City Hall that middle-class residents will flee the city for Rio Mesa -- just as they left Fresno for Clovis.

The bright spot for Fresno is that environmental and citizens groups opposed to Rio Mesa and its individual components may keep the project area bottled up in court for years. Opponents have plenty of fodder, especially with the state bent on reducing greenhouse emissions and the federal government restoring salmon in the San Joaquin River.

Regional planning is coming to the Valley. The environmental consequences of growth and the challenges of providing supporting infrastructure are too big to ignore. The question is whether the collaboration is voluntary or forced on cities and counties by judges and state and federal dictates.

City Hall can best do its part by leading by example.

[Bakersfield Californian Editorial, Thurs., Dec. 6, 2012:](#)

### **Even small air quality improvements helpful**

We often hear about the dire impacts of air pollution on health, but a new study sheds positive light on the flip side of the issue: Efforts to clean the air are paying off. The study, by researchers at Harvard, found that even small reductions in fine particulate-matter pollution increased life expectancy, especially in urban areas and among women.

The study looked at air quality data between 2000 and 2007 from 545 counties across the United States and found an average increase in life expectancy of about one-third of a year. Air pollution has decreased dramatically since the 1970s, but progress began to slow in 2000. So the new study set out to explore the question of whether the smaller reductions in air pollution of recent years still had measurable health benefits.

These studies help to underscore the importance of combating air pollution and why we spend so much time and money in pursuit of eradicating air pollution. The bottom line, gleaned from this study: Cleaner air helps us live longer, healthier lives. That's something we should all be in favor of.