

Valley air district granted \$3.77 million for clean-engine programs

By The Business Journal Staff

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The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has awarded \$3.77 million in grants to the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District to replace more than 200 vehicles.

About \$2.2 million will go toward a program to replace 105 heavy-duty diesel trucks in the Valley. The new trucks will be powered by 2018 or newer model-year engines. The funds will be combined with \$11.56 million in matching funds from the air district and participating trucking fleets, according to an EPA news release.

Another \$1.57 million will replace 100 diesel-powered farm tractors with new equipment with cleaner engines. Those funds will be combined with \$8.38 million from the air districts.

For more information about the programs, visit the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District website.

Car owners line up to clean up

By Almendra Carpizo

Stockton Record, Sunday, Oct. 21, 2018

STOCKTON — Hundreds of vehicles lined up at the San Joaquin County Fairgrounds on Saturday for an event intended to help Valley communities repair or replace their older, high-polluting vehicles.

The Tune In & Tune Up Car Clean-up event — the third this year in Stockton — helps vehicle owners by providing free emissions tests to determine whether their vehicle qualifies for a \$500 voucher for repairs. And this time, people who met certain requirements had the opportunity to receive incentives to replace their vehicle with a newer, fuel-efficient gas-powered vehicle, a hybrid vehicle or battery electric vehicle.

The event connects San Joaquin Valley residents with great opportunities for doing their part to clean up the air while helping people with some of the issues they face in terms of quality of life, reducing fuel costs and owning a cleaner vehicle, said Samir Sheikh, executive director of the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution District.

“It’s really been a source of pride for the air district being able to develop programs like these that are a win-win situation,” he said.

The four-hour event, which is sponsored by the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District and hosted by Valley Clean Air Now, drew an array of vehicles, including classic Mercedes-Benz and BMWs, lifted trucks, 1990s sedans, an ice cream truck and a motorhome. Technicians were expected to inspect at least 500 vehicles, and if a vehicle failed the emissions test, the owner received a \$500 voucher for smog-related repairs.

Vehicle owners began lining up on South Airport Way well before 6:30 a.m., which is when the fairgrounds opened its doors.

Alejandro Corona, 55, waited several hours before his 1998 Chevrolet Cheyenne was up for inspection.

Corona said he has had the truck for almost 20 years but it no longer fits the needs of his family. His daughter uses it to commute to Sacramento for school and between that and driving around town, he’s spending a couple of hundred dollars a week on gas.

“It doesn’t matter how long I have to stay out here,” Corona said. “It helps me a lot. It helps my family.”

Stockton Councilwoman Christina Fugazi, a Valley Air District board member, said there is a large disadvantaged population in Stockton, so bringing this event to the city serves many people in and outside the area.

People don’t have to make the choice whether they’re going to make a house payment and buy food or get their vehicle smog checked and registered, she said.

“They’re able to provide everything for their families,” Fugazi said. “And that’s what this program does for our residents here in Stockton and the surrounding community.”

According to the Valley Air Pollution Control District, while meteorology, geography and topography play a role in the Valley’s air pollution, vehicles are the largest source of emissions.

The replacement part of the program helps address that pollution issue by encouraging people to replace their 1999 or older high-polluting vehicle with a newer one. The program offers \$2,500-\$9,500 for Valley residents. The amount is based on the vehicle and the applicant’s household income.

Phillip Garcia and his wife, Robyn, drove their 1992 Honda Civic to the event with the hope to retire it and get a newer vehicle.

The couple tried to get it to pass a smog test, but the Civic is considered a gross polluter (a vehicle that pollutes more than a typical vehicle that fails a smog check), he said. The car is worth \$1,000, but it needs about \$900 in repairs so it doesn’t balance out. And as far as selling it, he said, no one wants to buy it.

This event is helpful for many families, Phillip Garcia said. It’s also beneficial to get these polluting vehicles off the street and help the environment.