

## **Free air purifiers to deal with wildfire risks being offered**

By Dennis Wyatt

The Bulletin, Thursday, June 30, 2022

The Valley Air District will help low income households weather wildfires that are ramping UP due to dry conditions made worse by the continuing drought.

The agency will make 1,500 portable residential air purifying units with one replacement filter available for free to low income households within disadvantaged communities in the San Joaquin Valley.

Manteca meets the definition of being a disadvantaged community.

Dubbed the “Clean Airs Pilot Program”, it involves residential versions of portable air purifiers that are now in every Manteca Unified School District classroom.

The purifiers — besides reducing the spreading of COVID, flu and even germs that cause colds — are designed to cleanse the air of smoke and other particles.

### **Having a ‘clean room’ helps combat fire impacts**

“Smoke from severe wildfires can inundate the Valley and make its way into homes, causing health impacts to our most vulnerable residents,” noted Samir Sheikh, Executive Director of the Valley Air District. “This program is designed to help families who may not otherwise be able to buy an in-home air purifier to protect their families during wildfires.”

In an indoor environment where windows and doors are closed and sealed tightly, HEPA air filtration devices, such as those that will be offered under this program, can reduce particulate matter indoors by more than 90 percent.

Use of air filtration devices to create “clean air rooms”, such as a bedroom, will ensure that the home has a dedicated space with safe indoor air quality during smoke events.

The 10 worst metro areas in the nation for air quality issues include Central Valley counties such as Bakersfield, Kern, Madera, Sacramento, Shasta, and Butte.

Despite being in better shape than places like Bakersfield, Fresno, Hanford, Sacramento, Roseville, Chico, and Redding San Joaquin County failed in all three categories of the State of the Air 2022 assessment. The report was issued by the American Red Cross based on data gleaned from the Environmental Protection Agency.

That means there has not been a single year since 2000 when there have been not been excessive high ozone days as well as an excessive number of 24-hour periods of high particle levels that did not exceed the acceptable levels of three days. Annual particle pollution was only a tad better with four years — 2009 thru 2012 when they were less than the acceptable 12 annual days.

### **130,000 people in SJ County have health issue risks made worse by wildfire smoke**

As a result, the American Red Cross noted there are more than 130,000 people among the county's 767,967 residents that have health issues that put them at greater risk. The list runs from 29,509 cases of adult asthma and 13,961 cases of pediatric asthma to 38,004 people with cardiovascular disease and 29,509 with COPD among other ailments.

Excessive ozone days have gone from a high of 36 in 1996 to 7 in 2020.

Particle pollution in the 24-hour category — exacerbated in recent years by wildfires — went from 12 in 2000 down to four 2005 before starting a mostly upward climb until the number of days reached 26 in 2020.

Ozone pollution is the result of hydrocarbons and nitrogen oxide emissions from motor vehicles or other sources, mixed in the presence of sunlight. It can lead to increased wheezing, coughing, and chest tightness, especially among susceptible children who play outdoors in polluted environments.

Particle pollution, also known as particulate matter or PM, is a general term for a mixture of solid and liquid droplets suspended in the air. Particle pollution comes in many sizes and shapes.

It can be made up of a number of different components, including acids (such as sulfuric acid), inorganic compounds (such as ammonium sulfate, ammonium nitrate, and sodium chloride), organic chemicals, soot, metals, soil or dust particles, and biological materials (such as pollen and mold spores).

Particulate matter can trigger asthma attacks, aggravate chronic bronchitis, and increase the risk of heart attack and stroke. Individuals with heart or lung disease should follow their doctors' advice for dealing with episodes of PM exposure. Those with existing respiratory conditions, including COVID-19, young children and the elderly, are especially susceptible to the health effects from this form of pollution.

### **Information on free air purifiers**

Residents experiencing poor air quality due to wildfire smoke should move to a filtered, air-conditioned environment with windows closed. Common cloth and paper masks being used as protection from COVID-19 may not be sufficient protection from wildfire smoke inhalation.

For outdoor workers and other individuals that may not be able to remain indoors, state health authorities recommend the use of N95 facemasks as feasible.

Free air purifiers will be made available soon to low-income households. For more information, email: [grants@valleyair.org](mailto:grants@valleyair.org), or speak to Air District staff, call 559-230-5800.

## **ARVIN AND LAMONT TO RECEIVE \$30 MILLION FOR CLEAR AIR INVESTMENTS**

By Erica Murillo

Kern Sol News, Wednesday, June 29, 2022

The Community Emissions Reduction Program (CERP) has approved over \$30 million in investments to reduce air pollution in the communities of Arvin and Lamont.

AB 617 has been working with the community of Arvin and Lamont for the past 16 months to be able to create measures that will help improve the air quality in these communities — a total of 31 measures have been implemented to help these communities.

These measures aim to reduce hazardous air pollutant impacts with approximately 136 tons of PM 2.5, 421 tons of NOx, and 161 tons of VOCs.

“We are targeting over 700 tons of reduction, and the community members are really focused on making sure that there will be emissions that will improve the air in Arvin and Lamont,” said Jessica Olsen, Director of Community Strategies and Resources.

The 31 measures will be taken to the California Air Resource Board in October to officially get them approved. As of right now, the implementation of measures can be started with certain measures.

One of the measures that can be started now would be changing agricultural equipment to zero-emission. Agriculture equipment is a big priority for the community members of Arvin and Lamont because there are a lot of agricultural fields around both communities.

Another measure that can be started right away would be doing outreach to inform community members about how to improve air quality and how they can help their communities. The outreach will be dedicated to talking to residents about how they can take measures to protect their houses, it also includes reaching out to schools to get schools involved as well.

There are a couple of priorities that the community is really focusing on to improve their community such as the use of pesticides.

AB 617 is working with the Department of Pesticides with the support and feedback that the community is providing such as providing monitoring for the use of pesticides for the safety of the community.

Another process that the community is prioritizing is to have community air monitoring. This will help community members and agencies understand what is impacting the air and what the community needs the most.

“We will continue working with the community on deploying and tracking within the boundaries so that we can start to understand what are the community impacts and how they are going to improve over time.

We definitely see air quality improvement and hopefully, that leads to better health outcomes and certainly a better quality of life for the community,” said Olsen.

AB 617 will continue to have meetings with the community to be able to determine how these measures will be implemented. The community is engaging and learning how applications work and how monitoring works to be able to implement ideas to help their community.

AB 617 has worked hard with the community and partnerships to be able to get where they are. With community co-leads who have stepped up to lead, Arvin and Lamont have been able to establish what they need in their community. It has been a long journey toward this approval. It will now be the beginning of the process to start implementing these measures.

“We are grateful for the approval because before we even took it to the board we took it to the CSC and asked them to vote and it was unanimous. We are grateful of people recognizing the process, recognizing the report, and being supportive of all of this is and the focused effort coming to their community,” Olsen said.

Implementing all 31 measures will be a five-year process and the community, AB 617, and the partnerships will continue to work together to help improve the air quality of Arvin and Lamont.

## **District urges Valley residents to celebrate 4th of July safely**

Hanford Sentinel, Wednesday, June 29, 2022

Air District officials are cautioning Valley residents that personal fireworks emit high levels of fine particulate matter (PM2.5), including soot, ash and metals, which can cause serious health effects. Individuals most at-risk are small children, the elderly and people with existing respiratory conditions.

“We are asking Valley residents to be mindful and considerate of their neighbors and the many sensitive individuals whose health may be impacted by the emissions that come from lighting personal fireworks,” said Samir Sheikh, San Joaquin Valley Air District Executive Director/APCO. “There are many ways to be patriotic and celebrate our nation’s independence without lighting fireworks,” he added.

Many Fourth of July celebrations and public fireworks displays are once again taking place throughout the San Joaquin Valley. The District suggests taking advantage of professional, community fireworks shows as a safer and more spectacular source of Independence Day entertainment.

Each Fourth of July, air monitors across the Valley reflect spikes in PM2.5 concentrations from fireworks, often four to five times higher than the health-based federal standard, and typically during evening hours, when personal fireworks are most in use. This unnecessary source of air pollution compromises air quality and public health. Fine particulate matter can invade the bloodstream, get deep into the lungs, and increase the risk of heart attack and stroke. This infographic illustrates how fireworks can negatively impact your health.

The District’s Real-time Air Advisory Network (RAAN) provides access to localized air quality data from an extensive air-monitoring network. Visit [myRAAN.com](http://myRAAN.com) and input any address in the San Joaquin Valley.

For more information about the Air District, call a regional office in Fresno (559) 230-6000, Modesto (209) 557-6400 or Bakersfield (661) 392-5500.

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Contributed Report

Tracy Press, Wednesday, June 29, 2022

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## **Valley experts warn about health issues from 4th of July fireworks**

**Experts say there are many ways to be patriotic and celebrate without lighting your own fireworks.**

By Brittany Jacob

ABC30, Wednesday, June 29, 2022

FRESNO, Calif. (KFSN) -- Celebrating Independence Day can come with a price.

Air District Officials want to remind you to monitor particular matter pollution and celebrate the holiday safely.

The 4th of July will be packed with fun-filled celebrations across the Valley - including the spectacular and elaborate displays that will light up the sky.

That's why Air District officials are cautioning residents of the dangerous particular matter or PM 2.5 that the fireworks emit.

"When we hear fireworks season, the first thing we think is education. Making sure the public knows the impacts of breathing fine particulate matter," says Heather Heinks with the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District.

An impact that's microscopic.

Officials say the matter is so small, it can invade the bloodstream, get deep into the lungs, and increase the risk of heart attack and stroke.

Exposure to PM 2.5 can trigger health issues, especially for small children, the elderly, and people with existing respiratory conditions.

Heinks says even a healthy person who does not have respiratory conditions might not feel so well after the holidays.

Every Independence Day, air monitors reflect spikes sometimes nearly five times higher than the health-based federal standard.

"Pollution is generally off the chart or at the top of the chart," says Heinks.

Heinks says there are many ways to be patriotic and celebrate without lighting your own fireworks.

"We would encourage you to see a professional show - those go aloft up into the atmosphere and there's time for you to retreat home before that settles and hits the monitors."

There are many local options for big shows, including Freedom Fest, produced by the Clovis Kiwanis Club for more than 30 years.

"I'm encouraging people to come out, come in, enjoy it, bring the kids, bring everyone and let's just get back to life the way it used to be," says Eddie DeLeon, the director of Clovis Kiwanis Club Freedom Fest.

Organizers are calling it the biggest fireworks show in the Central Valley.

Their big bang of a production will last about 20 minutes.

DeLeon says he believes it's also safer than using personal fireworks.

"If I had a thousand people blowing off a thousand fireworks in their front yard, you'd have a thousand of explosions of smoke and debris versus a thousand people in my place for just 20 min, there's a lot less smoke and debris."

The air district also encourages residents to celebrate at home with an outdoor movie night, silly string, glow sticks, or laser lights.