

## **High winds blow dust impacting Central California air quality**

California News Times, Friday, May 20, 2022

FRESNO, California (KFSN) – A thin mist is hovering over central California as gale-force winds blow dust and smoke across the area.

The National Weather Service in Hanford said a wind warning was in place until 9 a.m., with gusts of up to 40 miles per hour hitting parts of the valley early Friday morning. The wind will continue throughout the day.

South Valley communities have been hit hardest by deteriorating air quality, with the Air Quality Index (AQI) reaching dangerous conditions in some areas, such as Lemoore, Corcoran, Avenal and Stratford, according to AQI Map by AirNow.

Hanford's AQI was unhealthy for sensitive groups.

Cloudy skies were also visible over Fresno due to dust and smoke from a big fire in a car unit south of the city that occurred on Thursday.

The San Joaquin Valley air pollution control district has warned residents to avoid outdoor activities in affected areas.

Conditions were expected to worsen throughout the day, said ABC30 weather anchor Shayla Girardin.

## **With wildfire season looming, county to consider 'clean air centers' for vulnerable breathers**

By Robert Price

Kget.com, Thursday, May 19, 2022

BAKERSFIELD, Calif. (KGET) – You've heard of cooling centers – places for older or otherwise vulnerable residents to cool off when the Kern County heat becomes unbearable and even dangerous.

Well, here's a sign of the times. Very likely coming to a community center, senior center, sports facility, library, or school cafeteria near you: clean air centers.

The Valley Air District has secured a \$750,000 grant from a state pilot program for the purchase of portable electric air cleaners which can be deployed on exceptionally bad air days – specifically when wildfires coat the valley with smoke and particulate matter.

Based on its population on the valley side of the mountains, Kern County will receive a little more than \$130,000, which should be enough for about a hundred of the units.

At its Tuesday morning meeting the Board of Supervisors will decide if Kern County will be participating in the project, thought to be the first of its kind in the nation.

It's not as simple as accepting state funding – the county would be expected to take on certain expenses – staffing, utilities and associated costs.

The valley air district is now accepting applications from local organizations and governments interested in opening clean air centers, with priority given to those located in areas where they can serve the more vulnerable populations.