

## **Air officials warn of gusty wind in San Joaquin Valley**

Bee Staff Reports

Modesto Bee, Wednesday, May 22, 2013

SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY -- Air officials say people with sensitive respiratory systems should take precautions today because of blowing dust from gusty wind.

The caution is for the San Joaquin Valley, which includes Stanislaus, Merced and San Joaquin counties.

Exposure to blowing dust can cause serious health problems, aggravate lung disease, trigger asthma attacks and bronchitis, and increase risk of respiratory infections.

Residents can check the nearest air monitor at their location to determine local conditions.

Go to [www.valleyair.org](http://www.valleyair.org) or call the Modesto office at (209) 557-6400.

## **Hanford school district receives air quality award**

HESD efforts earn recognition from state health department

By Joseph Luiz

Hanford Sentinel, May 4, 2013

HANFORD — The Hanford Elementary School District is being rewarded for its focus on air quality by the California Department of Public Health. The district was awarded the Achievement in Respiratory (AIR) Health Award from California Breathing, a program of the CDPH focused on reducing asthma.

The award is given to schools and districts that have adopted policies and practices that have led to cleaner air for students. The district will be presented with a plaque and \$5,000 during a board meeting on May 22.

“Our district has always put a strong emphasis on clean air,” said Director of Special Services Karen McConnell. “We’ve strived to create an asthma-friendly environment for our students.”

Although this is the first year the district received a health award, individual schools in the district have gotten the award in previous years. However, in writing the application for the award this year, McConnell said she wanted to see the whole district recognized.

“We wanted to highlight the entire district,” she said. “We’ve done a lot of work as a whole to improve air quality for students.”

Some of this work includes creating policies that require a tobacco-free school and reduced car idling as well as making sure low-allergen plants and trees are provided. McConnell said the district has also worked with teachers to create a program called Open Airways, in which students are educated about asthma, what triggers it and how it can be managed.

“We live in an area where air quality is always under the microscope,” she said. “It’s our responsibility to make sure the kids are healthy and have a good environment to learn in.”

McConnell said the district will use the award money to help fund their current air quality practices and develop new programs down the line.

“We want to use it to continue to support health staff and how they’re teaching students about healthy living,” she said. “The money is going back into helping the kids develop a healthy lifestyle.”

## **Carbon auction price rises**

By Dale Kasler

Sacramento Bee, Wednesday, May. 22, 2013

California's heavy industries spent \$280 million on greenhouse gas permits in the state's latest carbon auction – a sign to environmentalists that the controversial program is hitting its stride.

The California Air Resources Board, reporting on the results of its third carbon auction, said credits that allow polluters to emit greenhouse gases this year sold for \$14 a ton. That's the highest price for any of the auctions.

Allowances for use in 2016 sold for the minimum \$10.71 a ton. The auction was held last Thursday.

The auctions are an essential piece of the California cap- and-trade market, which is designed to reduce carbon emissions.

More than 400 big industrial polluters are required to cap their carbon emissions at certain levels. They are given most of their emissions for free.

If they exceed the cap, they have to buy credits, either from the state or from other market participants.

Business groups have complained about cost. The California Chamber of Commerce and Pacific Legal Foundation are suing to eliminate the auctions, saying they amount to an unconstitutional tax.

But the Environmental Defense Fund's Tim O'Connor said the latest results show "cap and trade is working." O'Connor, director of EDF's California climate and energy initiative, said carbon prices have remained reasonable – but are creating financial incentives to reduce emissions.

In the latest auction, about \$117 million of the proceeds will go to the state. A total of about \$256 million in auction proceeds have flowed to the state from the three auctions.

The rest goes to utilities, which have special status. Unlike other polluters, utilities get all their carbon credits for free, although they're required to sell them in the auctions. They use the proceeds to buy the credits they need for their emissions purposes.

Gov. Jerry Brown has proposed loaning \$500 million in state auction proceeds to the general fund. But some lawmakers have objected to that, saying the money is supposed to go to climate-change programs.