

Valley Air District calls for artwork from students

By Monica Velez

Merced Sun-Star, Thursday, Sept. 22, 2016

Local students in grades kindergarten through 12 are invited to submit art for the 2017 calendar to be distributed by the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District.

Every year, the Valley Air District creates a 13-month bilingual calendar with a compilation of student artwork accompanied by healthy air living messages. As long as the student lives in one of the eight counties the Valley Air District serves, they can apply. The entry deadline is Oct. 3.

"We really want kids to show their creativity and come up with their own messages and original artwork that convey cleaning the air in the San Joaquin Valley," said Anthony Presto, outreach and communications representative for the Valley Air District, in an email to the Sun-Star.

Examples of the 2016 calendar can be found on the district's website, www.valleyair.org.

"We are looking for messages that remind Valley residents how they can help clean the air by doing things like carpooling, walking or riding their bike, driving an electric car or using an electric lawn mower and making sure they don't burn in their fireplace or wood stove on days that are prohibited, et cetera," Presto said.

Approximately 20,000 calendars will be distributed to libraries, schools, businesses and public agencies, the Valley Air District said in a statement. Organizers will select 14 pictures, which should be submitted on a 8 1/2-by-11-inch paper.

Educating the public about healthy air is critical to the mission of the Valley Air District, Presto said.

"This contest is not only a great way to remind Valley residents and businesses about how important clean air is for public health, but also gives kids a chance to show everyone their artistic talent while they learn about an issue that every kid should understand – air quality," he said.

Information and the application to enter artwork can be found at www.valleyair.org.

Gusty winds prompt health caution, wind advisory

Bakersfield Californian, Wednesday, September 21, 2016

The National Weather Service in Hanford has issued a wind advisory for Wednesday night and Thursday in the San Joaquin Valley. Be prepared, the weather service says, for strong winds, much cooler weather and localized blowing dust, which can result in unhealthy concentrations of particulate matter.

As a result, air pollution officials issued a health cautionary statement effective Wednesday afternoon through late Thursday night throughout the entire San Joaquin Valley. Exposure to particulate pollution can cause serious health problems, aggravate lung disease, trigger asthma attacks and bronchitis, and increase risk of respiratory infections.

Where conditions warrant, the NWS said in a news release, people with heart or lung disease should follow their doctors' advice for dealing with episodes of particulate exposure. Additionally, older adults and children should avoid prolonged exposure or heavy exertion, depending on their local conditions.

The impacts of the strong winds may include downed trees and power lines, the NWS said. Fire could spread quickly due to low humidity and gusty winds. And hazardous conditions could develop above 8,000 feet due to cold temperatures and light snow.

It's expected to be windy in the Kern County mountains and desert late Wednesday night and again Thursday afternoon through Thursday night.

Lighter winds and a day-to-day warming trend will begin Friday and continue through the middle of next week as high pressure again is expected to build in from the Pacific.

A wind advisory is in effect for the San Joaquin Valley from 6 p.m. to midnight Wednesday. A wind advisory may be issued for the west side of the San Joaquin Valley for Thursday afternoon.

A wind advisory is also in effect for the Kern County mountains and desert from 11 p.m. Wednesday night through 5 a.m. Friday.

A Red Flag Warning is in effect for the Kern County mountains and desert for the combination of low humidities and strong winds from 12 p.m. to 8 p.m. Thursday.

Be careful out there.