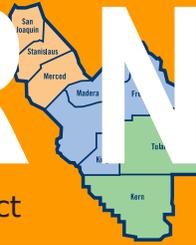


# VALLEY AIR NEWS

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## School flag program grows and grows

With a goal of flying color-coded flags at every school in the Valley and increasing air quality awareness, more than 400 air quality flags are now on school flagpoles throughout the San Joaquin Valley.

The Air District's partnership with the American Lung Association of Central California (ALACC) and local asthma coalitions has proven extremely successful in its effort to steadily increase the number of schools participating in the free program.

In February of 2004 The Merced/Mariposa County Asthma Coalition was the first in the San Joaquin Valley to begin implementing a flag program. With a grant from The California Endowment, more than 95 schools in Merced County are now flying flags.

The Stanislaus County Asthma Coalition initiated a program for schools in Stanislaus County with help from a grant by the MedicAlert Foundation.

The Tulare County Asthma Coalition also received a grant from The California Endowment and has introduced the flag program in 71 Schools.

The Kern County Asthma Coalition created the Air Quality Flag System as a component of its Comprehensive Asthma Management Plan (CAMP), which guides schools in implementing effective asthma management practices.

The flags, colored green, yellow, orange and red, correspond to the colors of the Air Quality Index (AQI) and advise parents, students and school staff what air quality has been forecasted for the day. Green indicates that air quality is "good," yellow indicates "moderate," orange is "unhealthy for sensitive groups" and red is "unhealthy."

The total number of schools in each county now participating in the program is as follows:



Students at Our Lady of Fatima School Display the green air quality flag depicting healthy air, as they prepare to run it up the flag pole for a ceremony as the first school in Modesto to carry the program.

- Fresno County - 129 schools
- Kern County - 26 schools
- Kings County - 15 schools
- Madera County - 10 schools
- Merced County - 95 schools
- San Joaquin County - 13 schools
- Stanislaus County - 71 schools
- Tulare County - 71 schools

In addition to its' partnership with the ALACC, the Air District provides support to each of the other flag programs within the Valley air basin through financial grants or collateral educational material to enhance the educational components of the program.

The program provides sets

of four flags to each participating school at no cost, along with other outreach materials.

A comprehensive "Active Indoor Recess" Guide was also collaboratively developed by some flag program sponsors and is available to schools as an enhancement to guide schools on policy regarding days when red or orange flags are to be flown.

"We're providing the flags as a visual communication tool, not only for kids and teachers as they walk on campus, but the community that surrounds the school," said SJVAPCD public education administrator Jaime Holt.

## Valley Schools get the Clean Air Challenge

Middle and high school students throughout the San Joaquin Valley will benefit from an innovative, hands-on training program offered free-of-charge to their teachers.

Clean Air Challenge is a theme-based curriculum designed to teach students about air-quality issues and how their personal decisions collectively affect air.

Materials for this new curriculum are provided to teachers and their students through public-private funding grants. During the 2004-05 academic year, 52 San Joaquin Valley teachers attended three instructional workshops held in Stockton, Fresno and Bakersfield, and used the Clean Air Challenge with more than 6,300 of their students.

Training for the 2005-2006 academic year began in October in Ripon. Teachers were trained in November and December in Fresno and Bakersfield. As a result of the most recent workshops, 69 more teachers will introduce the Clean Air Challenge to 7,500 students this year.



Teachers conduct experiments during a workshop in Stockton as part of their training to teach the Clean Air Challenge to their students.

The training workshops were funded by a grant from Valley Clean Air Now, a private, non-profit organization that educates the public about the importance of taking personal responsibility for improving air quality. The Valley Air District is coordinating the curriculum's introduction into Valley schools.

Northern California teachers who piloted the program acknowledged how well the curriculum correlates with California science standards. As a result, over the past two years, more than 250 Northern California teachers have embraced the program.

"The most effective way to influence the future of our environment is through what our students are learning today," said Tom Jordan, the Air District's Special Projects Manager. "This valuable educational resource will benefit the Valley's children - tomorrow's adults - for years to come."

Teachers were selected based on the subjects that best fit the curriculum of Clean Air Challenge: chemistry, earth, physical, environmental, integrated and general science.

To learn more about the Clean Air Challenge, contact Glenn Craig at 310-394-9864 or [service@entford.com](mailto:service@entford.com).



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AIR POLLUTION CONTROL DISTRICT