

VALLEY AIR NEWS

February 2021



District welcomes new Governing Board member

The District welcomes new Governing Board member, Mayor Pro Tem for the City of Los Banos, Deborah Lewis. A native of New Orleans, Lewis was raised in San Diego and graduated from San Jose State University with a BA in Vocal Music. She worked for Santa Clara County for 30 years in criminal investigation, social services and mental health conservatorship. She was appointed by Gov. Schwarzenegger to serve on the Merced County Fair Board in 2007 and served as a planning commissioner in Los Banos for 10 years. She was the first black female elected to public office in Merced County, and says her only child Charles is her greatest accomplishment. We welcome Mayor Pro Tem Lewis to the Board.



District launches Low-Dust Nut Harvester Program

The District opened the Low-Dust Nut Harvester Replacement Program on February 9, 2021, inviting agricultural operators Valley-wide to apply for grants toward the purchase of low dust equipment reducing PM10 (particulate matter 10 microns and smaller) emissions from nut harvesting in the San Joaquin Valley.

With funding awarded by the U.S. EPA's (Environmental Protection Agency) Targeted Air Shed Grant Program and CARB (California Air Resources Board) the District is making available \$12.5 million for Valley growers to replace older, conventional harvesters with new, low-dust technology.

"This program will significantly reduce the pollution impact on Valley residents during the harvest season," stated Todd DeYoung, Director of Strategy and Incentives for the Valley Air District. He added, "This would not be possible without the valuable partnerships with Valley agricultural organizations and funding made available by the federal EPA, and CARB."

The program will pay for 50 percent of the cost, or as much as \$150,000 per unit toward the replacement of older harvesting equipment with new low-dust nut harvesters designed to reduce PM10 emissions by at least 40 percent. This video helps demonstrate the benefits of the new technology.

More information is available on the Low-Dust Nut Harvester Replacement Program here: valleyair.org/grants/low-dust-nut-harvester.htm

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