

Chapter 6 – OUTREACH



6 OUTREACH

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Public participation is vital to good air quality and education is crucial to good public participation. When government agencies, major industries, educators, businesses, and the general public work together, advancements are made to improve air quality. The Air District makes every effort to improve public education initiatives and to promote better community cooperation to deal with air pollution problems. The District uses various methods of communication to raise public awareness about ozone:

- Participation in workshops
- Web site publications,
- Press releases and public service announcements
- Distribution of fact sheets, brochures and other literature
- Intensive campaigns to encourage broadcast and print media coverage during ozone season about ozone and its health effects
- Use of billboards to convey important information about high-profile air pollution control programs
- Conducting key public outreach campaigns in multiple languages as appropriate

One such campaign is the District's "Spare the Air" Days, which begins in early summer. Spare the Air is a voluntary, summertime effort aimed at reducing harmful levels of ground-level ozone. The program works by notifying Valley residents in advance of days when air quality is forecast to reach unhealthy levels ("Spare the Air" days). The District uses television, radio, newspaper ads, and direct contact to get the word out about future unhealthy levels of summer air pollution. Daily air quality information is also available by dialing (800) SMOG-INFO (766-4463). When a Spare the Air day has been called, residents are asked to reduce or avoid activities that cause air pollution for the following 24 hours. Based on previous years, about 25 "Spare the Air" days occur per season.

6.2 WORKSHOPS

Prior to issuing the Draft *Extreme OADP*, the District held two rounds of public workshops on developing the Plan. The dates of these workshops were, July 23, 2003 for the 1st round and January 6 and 7, 2004 for the second round of workshops. The workshop held on July 23, 2003 covered the technical issues addressed in the 2003 Ozone Attainment Demonstration Plan. About 35 people attended through the Fresno site, 12 at Bakersfield, and 12 at Modesto. The workshop began at 1:30 pm and ended at 4:45 pm. The comment period for this

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workshop ended on August 7, 2003. Stakeholders submitted about 30 comments in response to information presented at this workshop. The District summarized the comments and provided responses on its website.

The January 6th and 7th workshops presented more specific information related to the Extreme OADP, and also provided a status report on the development of the Ozone Attainment Demonstration Plan for the San Joaquin Valley Air Basin. About 30 people attended the first workshop (January 6, 2004) and about 20 attended the second workshop (January 7, 2004). The comment period for these workshops ended on January 23, 2004. Participants at the two workshops made over forty verbal comments, and several other stakeholders submitted written comments. The District summarized the comments and developed responses to these comments that were posted on the District website.

6.3 CITIZEN'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC) consists of 24 primary and 24 alternate members. Each of the following groups has one unpaid representative from each county in the SJVAB: the Industry/Agriculture, Environment and City. Citizens Advisory Committee Meetings are generally held on the first Tuesday of each month at 10:00 a.m. at the Central Region Office with video-conference links to Modesto and Bakersfield. On July 1, 2003 staff briefed the CAC on ozone and on development of the *Extreme OADP*.

6.4 DISTRICT GOVERNING BOARD

During 2003 and 2004, District staff briefed the Governing Board a number of times on various issues related to the 1-hour ozone *Extreme OADP*. These briefings were done at regularly scheduled monthly Governing Board meetings as well as at other public Governing Board meetings. Agendas and minutes for Governing Board meetings are found on the District's web site.

6.5 WEB SITE POSTINGS

On its web site, the District has information pertaining to ozone, including maps, current plans, workshop postings, and other ozone related information. This information is available to the public 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Workshop documents are available, two weeks prior to the workshops, to give the public time to review the staff report and draft version of the plan. Also available is the current 1-hour ozone adopted plan, archived workshops, adopted rules and regulations, federal regulations and Guidance documents. The web site also includes information on the federal 8-hour ozone standard and the proposed state 8-hour ozone standard as it becomes available.

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The web site provides links to other government and private web sites with information such as air quality research studies (CCOS, IMS 95, SARMAP), other air districts; ARB and EPA. The web site provides links to information on the designation and classification of the San Joaquin valley and other air basins.

Through the use of the web the district is able to effectively reach many more people at very low cost. The Internet allows the Air District to notify the public, especially those that fall into the sensitive group category, when the air quality is unhealthy.

6.6 DRAFT *EXTREME OADP*

This section is reserved for workshops and other public outreach taking place after issuance of the Draft *Extreme OADP*.

