

Fresno Bee Earth Blog Monday, October 31, 2011

## **Air district didn't need EPA waiver after all**

By Mark Grossi

A few weeks ago, the local air district asked federal officials to ignore several high ozone readings in Sequoia National Park. A forest fire caused readings to spike, and the district wanted a waiver.

Turns out, the district didn't need a waiver.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency doesn't count violations from Sequoia because the park's monitors have not been reviewed by EPA. These extensive reviews are required to make the readings official for EPA.

The agency won't do such a review until all the other monitors in the Valley show clean air in the region.

The park says the monitors are already checked by the California Air Resources Board, so there is no issue over whether they actually work. They do. It's just that the EPA needs to go through its own process.

For years, I've been including Sequoia's numbers because the state does. The state shows the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District has 110 violations of the federal eight-hour ozone standard this year, and that's what I report. It's the highest number in the nation.

But if you ask the air district, officials report Sequoia separately and say there are about 90 violations. The district says the violations are separate because the issues are different in the mountains. But separately, the count makes South Coast Air Basin the worst ozone hot spot in the country with 107.

## **Seasonal burning restrictions begin**

Merced Sun-Star, Tuesday, Nov. 1, 2011

The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District said the annual residential fireplace-use regulation program that reduces harmful airborne particulate pollution begins its ninth season today.

Check Before You Burn, which runs from November through February each winter, determines when residential wood-burning will add dangerous levels of particulate matter -- tiny pieces of soot, ash, dust and other materials -- to the Valley's air, and prohibits the use of residential wood-burning devices.

The past two winters have been the cleanest on record for the air basin. The air basin has been declared in attainment of standards regarding the larger form of particulate matter, PM10.

High levels of particulate pollution can have serious health effects, including bronchitis, lung disease and increased risk of heart attacks and stroke. Young children, elderly people and those with existing respiratory and coronary disease are especially vulnerable, according to the release

There are two forecast levels, depending on air quality: "Wood Burning Prohibited" and "Please Burn Cleanly." When a prohibition is declared, burning any solid fuel in a residential fireplace or wood-burning device isn't permitted and violations may result in fines. There are two exemptions:

If the residence does not have access to natural-gas service, even if propane is available; or if burning solid fuel is the sole source of heat for the residence.

Daily wood-burning forecasts will be available by county each day at 4:30 p.m., beginning Monday at <http://www.valleyair.org/aqinfo/>

WoodBurnpage.htm or by calling 1-800 766-4463.

## **Tulare City Council sets meeting agenda**

Visalia Times-Delta and Tulare Advance-Register, Tuesday, Nov. 1, 2011

The Tulare City Council will meet at 7 p.m. today at the Council Chambers, 491 North M St.

Items on the agenda include:

Authorize City Manager Don Dorman to enter into a \$125,000 agreement with Eden-Tyler Technologies Inc., for building permits and code enforcement system software programs.

Authorize City Manager Don Dorman to execute a letter agreement for services with International Agri-Center, Inc. for police overtime and traffic control services.

Update on plans and [funding](#) for Mulcahy Park.

Approval to accept the \$1.2 million COPS Hiring Program grant administered by the United States Department of Justice's Office of Community Oriented Policing Services.

Discussion of potential charter amendments in preparation for the June 2012 election.

Designate two council members to serve as primary and alternate members to represent the city of Tulare on the Special City Selection Committee for the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District.

Status Report on Cartmill Avenue Interchange funding through Measure 1B.

Before regular session, council will meet at 6 p.m. in a special session.

The agenda item is:

A presentation by national demographics [corporation](#) regarding next steps in the public participation process for district election boundaries and receive council direction.

## **Research before you burn**

By Sara Jane Pohlman

Lodi News Sentinel, Tuesday, November 1, 2011

San Joaquin Valley homeowners will need to do a little research before lighting their fireplaces from now until February.

Residential woodburning can release airborne particulates and pollute the surrounding area. As a result, the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District has entered its ninth season of regulating wood burning in residential zones. The daily rulings are based on weather forecasts and are available by 4:30 p.m. Violating a burn prohibition can result in fines.

Check the [San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District website](#) to find out if you can use your fireplace each day. Or call the SMOG-INFO line at 800-766-4463. The website also has information on what materials can be safely burned as well as who might be exempt from the restriction.

## **Air officials issue fireplace-use ban**

The Business Journal Mon., Oct. 31, 2011

The first fireplace and wood stove prohibition of the 2011-12 Check Before You Burn season has been issued for Kings and the Valley portion of Kern counties for Tuesday, Nov. 1.

The daylong and mandatory curtailment because of poor air quality will be in place from midnight Monday, Oct. 31 through midnight Tuesday, Nov 1. The curtailment applies to burning wood, pellets and manufactured fire logs.

Check Before You Burn runs each winter from November through February and reduces wintertime particulate pollution by restricting the use of wood-burning devices when air quality is poor. Forecasts are issued by county.

“The past two winters have been exceptionally clean, in large part because of the public’s support of Check Before You Burn,” said Seyed Sadredin, the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District’s executive director. “We are hopeful that this year will see a repeat of that scenario.”

Wood burning pumps dangerous particulate matter into Valley skies. It has been shown to cause lung infections and exacerbate respiratory and cardiac illness. Exceptions to the prohibition are residences that do not have access to natural gas service, and if burning solid fuel is the sole source of heat for the residence.

[Bakersfield Californian, Editorial, Tuesday, Nov. 1, 2011:](#)

### **Watch that fireplace**

The Check Before You Burn program begins today. The program isn't especially popular, but it seems to be achieving the desired effect. Residential wood-burning restrictions, which kick in when air quality on the valley floor is poor, have paid dividends.

The region has seen wintertime pollution reductions that would have cost hundreds of millions of dollars to achieve through additional industry pollution regulations. As a result, the past four winters have been the cleanest on record and other regions of the state have adopted no-burn policies due to the program's achievements.

Please follow the rules and check before you burn; it's a small sacrifice with big payoffs.