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Board Agenda Item

TO: Air Pollution Control District Board

FROM: Aeron Arlin Genet, Air Pollution Control Officer 

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SUBJECT: Update on Public Outreach Activities

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive and file this update on District outreach activities.

BACKGROUND:

The District conducts public outreach throughout Santa Barbara County to provide communities with air quality information. This regular agenda item will provide an update on recent outreach efforts by District staff since the previous Board meeting on May 16, 2019.

DISCUSSION:

The District uses a variety of methods and venues to connect with the community about air quality information and District programs. Those methods and venues include the District website, news releases, air quality alerts, social media (Twitter, Instagram and Nextdoor), school and civic group presentations, interagency coalitions, events and festivals, media interviews, and phone calls with the public. Efforts are made to provide information in English and Spanish. For this recurring agenda item, outreach activities will be organized into the following categories as needed: Agency Awareness, Community Programs, and Interagency and Regulatory Support Efforts.

This update covers outreach efforts from May 17 to present. Here are the outreach activities that have occurred during this timeframe:

Agency Awareness

- **OurAir.org Website Revamp:** Efforts continue with website design professionals to revamp the District website to improve navigational options, maximize popular webpages for easy access, and refresh the overall look. Internal and external user surveys were conducted to better understand desired improvements to the website. Updates to the website will also ensure that the District complies with the new Brown Act, and Digital Accessibility Access Act requirements governing site content and accessibility. The new website is scheduled to launch in the coming months.

Community Programs

- **Low-Cost Air Sensors:** Per Board's approval in December 2018, the District has been entering into agreements with community partners countywide to deploy low-cost air sensors. Low-cost air sensors, such as PurpleAir, provide informative data, and are a popular tool for community members to understand localized, neighborhood-specific air quality conditions, providing additional information to the regional conditions monitored by the District's more sophisticated air quality monitoring network. District staff developed a map to optimize the geographical distribution of the devices countywide. Sensors are now installed at various locations, including schools; installations will be completed in the coming months. Local teachers are also using these sensors as part of a grant program overseen by the District and County Education Office. Community partners interested in learning more about using a low-cost air sensor are encouraged to visit the District website: www.ourair.org/sensors
- **Clean Air Ambassadors:** The District continues to work with four local college students to administer the Clean Air Ambassador program, which teaches K-3 grade students about air pollution and environmental protection. The program launched in April, and teacher feedback has been enthusiastic. The first year of the program saw the Ambassadors visit eight different classrooms at four schools throughout the county and deliver two lessons per class: Hollister Elementary (Goleta), Brandon Elementary (Goleta), Benjamin Foxen Elementary (Santa Maria), and Ralph Dunlap Elementary (Orcutt). For more information about this program, or to request the Clean Air Ambassadors visit a particular school, go to the District website: www.ourair.org/clean-air-ambassadors-program
- **School Presentations and Visits:** District staff regularly give presentations about the District's mission, jurisdiction, and programs to schools, pre-K through college. Since the May Board meeting, District staff attended the Science Night at Battles Elementary School in Santa Maria. Staff also provided information to a San Marcos High School student regarding a class project on cars and air pollution. Lastly, staff attended the Santa Barbara County Education Office's annual Education Celebration to recognize this year's recipients of the Care for Our Earth Grants, a long-running partnership grant program involving the District, County Water Agency, utility companies, and Education Office.

Interagency and Regulatory Support Efforts

- **Marine Shipping / Vessel Speed Reduction Program:** The 2019 voluntary incentive program launched in May and will run through mid-November. Fifteen shipping companies have voluntarily registered to participate in this year's program so far. As part of continued efforts to spread the word about how marine shipping affects emissions, APCO Aeron Arlin Genet was part of a panel discussion on that topic as part of Capitol Hill Ocean Week in Washington, D.C. in early June. More info about the conference: <https://marinesanctuary.org/event/capitol-hill-ocean-week-2019/>. Efforts are also underway to establish Federal and State legislation to create a recognition program and earmark a steady funding source for the continuation of the Vessel Speed Reduction Program in California.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The costs for the outreach efforts and activities described above are included in the budget approved by your Board. There are no additional fiscal impacts.