




Agenda Item: G-3
Agenda Date: June 18, 2020
Agenda Placement: Regular
Estimated Time: 10 minutes
Continued Item: No

Board Agenda Item

TO: Air Pollution Control District Board

FROM: Aeron Arlin Genet, Air Pollution Control Officer 

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SUBJECT: New District Website and Agency Awareness Campaign

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive and file this update and presentation on the new District website.

BACKGROUND:

The District has been working with a local website designer to revamp the agency's website for the first time in several years. The new website will retain the same URL as the previous version: www.OurAir.org.

DISCUSSION:

The goal of this project has been to enhance popular features on the District website and improve certain components as deemed necessary from a mix of user feedback and updated best practices. In addition to a fresh look, highlights of the new website will include:

- **A reimagined version of the existing webpage that shows hourly air quality conditions throughout the county and countywide daily air quality forecasts:** On average, the District website as a whole sees approximately 300,000 page views per year; of that count, more than 30 percent of views are of this webpage alone. The District wanted to provide different ways for Santa Barbara County residents and visitors to look at and understand local air quality data.

- **Increased resources for Spanish speakers:** The District has consistently provided translated versions of news releases, air quality alerts, and other materials on the website. However, those items were not previously easy to find in a central location. With the new website, all of the resources in Spanish will be easy to find on one main landing page. Staff have worked with a translator to make entire webpages available in Spanish that previously were not available, and will continue to make additional webpages available.
- **Improved overall navigation and ADA compatibility:** The District frequently heard from the public that the drop-down menus on the previous website were not optimally organized, leading to difficulties in finding particular webpages. The search function on the previous website was often unreliable. On the new website, the menu is streamlined and more intuitive; the addition of a site map and an improved search function will help if visitors want more detailed options for finding their desired webpage. The new website also continues to ensure that information meets the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines.
- **A splash webpage for wildfire information and other air quality incidents:** As mentioned previously, the District's overall website receives an average of 300,000 page views annually. However, those numbers increase dramatically during wildfires. For example, in December 2017 alone, the website saw more than 1 million page views due to air quality concerns caused by the Thomas Fire. For that reason, a splash webpage template was developed that could be implemented on short notice to provide a one-stop shop for wildfire smoke-related resources, available directly on the homepage.
- **Photos of Santa Barbara County's varied scenery:** The District has worked with a photographer to capture images of Santa Barbara County. It was important for the new website to have more images with a local focus versus stock images, in order to showcase our county's variety of landscapes and notable characteristics.

Staff are working with the website designer to finalize revisions before the new website goes live. Tied to the upcoming website launch, a bilingual outreach campaign will be launched to Santa Barbara County residents. The educational campaign will not only highlight the resources available online, but also serve as a general awareness campaign about the District's mission, jurisdiction, and programs. This effort will include information about ways to subscribe to receive air quality alerts and news from the District, including a new text-alert option launching in conjunction with the new website.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The cost for this project was included in the budget approved by your Board. There are no additional fiscal impacts.