




air pollution control district  
SANTA BARBARA COUNTY

Agenda Item: D-3  
Agenda Date: August 20, 2020  
Agenda Placement: Admin  
Estimated Time: N/A  
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: Update on Public Outreach Activities

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### RECOMMENDATION:

Receive and file this update on District outreach activities.

### BACKGROUND:

The District conducts public outreach throughout Santa Barbara County to provide air quality information. This regular agenda item will provide an update on recent outreach efforts by District staff since the previous Board meeting on June 18, 2020.

### DISCUSSION:

The District uses a variety of methods to share information about air quality and District programs. Those methods 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 the docket deadline of the June 18 meeting to present.

#### Agency Awareness

- **Media Relations:** The District regularly receives questions from the media regarding specific District programs as well as general air quality topics. During this time period, the District received media attention on the following issues:

Aeron Arlin Genet, Air Pollution Control Officer

- Clean Air Rooms: *Edhat*
- County Grand Jury Report on Cannabis: *CalCoastNews*
- **E-newsletter:** The District issued a bilingual e-newsletter on June 30 to approximately 1,900 subscribers. Articles covered the importance of creating a “clean air room” at home, the District’s continued work and new protocols in response to COVID-19, the results of the 2019 marine shipping program, and more. The next e-newsletter is planned for September. People can sign up to receive future e-newsletters on the District website: [www.ourair.org/subscribe](http://www.ourair.org/subscribe).

### **Community Programs**

- **Education Programs:** Due to planned distance learning for schools for this fall semester, District staff and the District’s Clean Air Ambassadors program will be unable to visit classrooms in person. However, staff are working on alternative ways to share air quality information with students and teachers. Staff are also finalizing a video about the Clean Air Ambassadors to promote the program to schools and teachers for future in-person class visits. That video will be shared with your Board at a future meeting, along with a presentation about the Clean Air Ambassadors program.

### **Interagency and Regulatory Support Efforts**

- **Smoke Messaging:** Staff continue to promote the infographics (jointly issued with the Santa Barbara County Public Health Department in June) encouraging people to create “clean air rooms” in their homes to prepare for wildfire smoke. Staying indoors as much as possible is the best protection against the harmful effects of smoke; ensuring that indoor air quality is clean during increased time spent inside is important. Staff have been working in partnership with other air districts in California to consistently promote the benefits of “clean air rooms” as a long-term strategy for people to protect themselves against wildfire smoke. This effort is especially important during the COVID-19 pandemic, as N-95 masks are in short supply and should be reserved for frontline workers; the cloth face coverings that people wear to protect others (not themselves) from the expelling of potentially virus-containing droplets do not meaningfully prevent the inhalation of the particulate matter that is present in wildfire smoke. As part of the District’s efforts to promote “clean air rooms” countywide, staff are developing a survey to gain a better understanding of whether and/or how households use such devices.

During this time, staff also began preparing for prescribed burns planned for various locations throughout the county, starting in September, as conditions allow.

### **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.