




air pollution control district
SANTA BARBARA COUNTY

Agenda Item: D-1
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Agenda Placement: Admin
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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

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 20, 2024.

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 (i.e., X – formally known as 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 June 13, 2024, to the Board meeting docket deadline of August 8, 2024.

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, media interest in the District included the following coverage:
 - Local air quality impacted by fires burning in the state: *KEYT*;
 - Air Quality Impacts from Lake Fire: *ABC7 Eyewitness News*; *Noozhawk*; *Edhat*; *Lompoc Record*; *KSBY*; *Santa Ynez Valley News*; *Santa Ynez Valley Star*; *KEYT*; *San Luis Obispo Tribune*; *City of Goleta*; *Santa Barbara Independent*; *KLCU*; *KVTA*;
 - “Blue Whales Blue Skies” program: *EIN Presswire*; *Santa Barbara Independent*;
 - Landscape Equipment Electrification Fund Program: *Noozhawk*; *KEYT*; *Edhat*;
 - 2024 Clean Air Grants Program: *Noozhawk*; *KEYT*; *KLCU*; *Santa Barbara Independent*; *Edhat*;
 - Prescribed Burn Program: *Noozhawk*; *KEYT*; *Santa Barbara Independent*.
- **Santa Barbara County California Special District Association Presentation (SBCCSDA):** On July 22, Aeron Arlin Genet, Air Pollution Control Officer, provided a presentation to approximately 30 members of the local SBCCSDA Chapter Meeting. The presentation provided an overview of the agency, long-range fiscal strategies, air monitoring and trends, smoke impacts from the Lake Fire, and grant/incentive opportunities.

Community Programs

- **Landscape Equipment Electrification Fund (LEEF) Program:** The District launched its fourth cycle of voucher incentive funds on July 11, 2024. A news release was issued to local media, and direct emails were sent to a list of approximately 1,650 local businesses, government agencies and interested organizations. On July 23, District staff presented on the program to the County of Santa Barbara Green Gardener Program. On July 8, 2024, staff also participated in an electric landscape demonstration event in Santa Maria sponsored by Oak Knolls Hardware, attended by about 60 people, and the landscape vendors included Stihl, Oso Electric Mowers, and Mean Green Mowers.
- **2024 Clean Air Grants (CAG) Program:** On July 29, 2024, the District launched the 2024 CAG Program. Applications for grant funds will be accepted until the program window closes on September 6, 2024. Staff sent a news release to about 2,700 recipients and direct emails to about 1,200 individuals and businesses. On June 27, 2024 staff presented the 2024 CAG Program to the Electric Drive 805 committee comprised of 30 public agency representatives. Posters promoting the 2024 CAG Program have been posted throughout the Santa Barbara Harbor. On August 27, 2024, the District will sponsor an electric off-road equipment event in Santa Maria that will include agricultural tractors, construction equipment, and utility terrain vehicles.

Interagency and Regulatory Support Efforts

- **Vandenberg Space Force Base (VSFB) Prescribed Training Burn:** In collaboration with VSFB, the District issued a news release on June 20, 2024 for a prescribed burn for training purposes at the VSFB that was scheduled for June 20-21, depending on weather conditions. The prescribed burn was expected to include approximately 100 acres of grassland and coastal sage scrub near the intersection of Watt Road and 13th street, north VSFB. A second news release was issued on July 1, 2024 for a prescribed burn for training purposes at VSFB scheduled for July 2, depending on weather conditions. The prescribed burn was expected to include approximately 10 acres of grassland and coastal sage scrub near the intersection of Watt Road and 13th street, north VSFB. Due to the Firefly Aerospace launch, the ignition request for the July 2 burn was cancelled and no burning occurred.
- **Lake Fire News Releases:** On July 6, 2024, smoke from the Lake Fire began impacting regions of the county. In coordination with Santa Barbara County Public Health, the District issued an Air Quality Watch for Santa Barbara County. The District participated in daily coordination with the Santa Barbara County Office of Emergency Management, and deployed portable monitors in Sisquoc, Los Alamos, and Paradise Road to provide a more complete display of regional air quality impacts to inform actions for residents and outside workers. The District website switched to the wildfire smoke splash page to provide easy access to resources such as clean air rooms, and the Environmental Protection Agency's Fire and Smoke map. The air quality conditions worsened to unhealthy levels in close proximity of Lake Fire, and an Air Quality Alert was issued on July 8 for Los Olivos and expanded to Santa Ynez Valley on July 11. When air quality conditions improved in the southern portion of the Lake Fire, the Air Quality Alert was lifted for Santa Ynez Valley, and the Air Quality Watch remained in place countywide until July 19. The District also distributed guidance for cleaning up ash, and asbestos from burned structures for individuals moving back into evacuated areas of the county. All the outreach materials for this wildfire were provided in both English and Spanish. No prescribed burns occurred during this time.

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.