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PRESS RELEASE

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AIR QUALITY UPDATE

The Butte County Air Quality Management District is issuing this Air Quality Update to notify the public of poor air quality that continues in certain areas of Butte County due to smoke from the numerous wildfires. The smoke has cleared somewhat by stronger southerly winds, but has yet to be cleared out completely. Due to wind shifts air quality can change rapidly at different times during the day; therefore, it is important to monitor the smoke throughout the day and make outdoor plans accordingly. The visibility chart below may be used to estimate the air quality in your area.

Although visible haze in Butte County continues as a result of wildfires, the outdoor activity-reduction recommendations issued are only in effect for areas in the County that continue to experience high levels of unhealthy air (foothills).

Below is a summary of the air monitoring data collected. The federal health-based 24-hour average Ambient Air Quality Standard is **35** micrograms per cubic meter (ug/m³) for fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}). Any value above 35 ug/m³ is considered unhealthy.

Chico: The 24-hour average yesterday was **62** ug/m³ which is equal to an Air Quality Index (AQI) of **143**. Today the AQI in Chico is forecast to reach **60**. At this level the air quality is rated **MODERATE**. Air quality in the valley areas can change hour to hour based on the winds. Today the smoke that has impacted valley areas has started to clear due to stronger southerly winds which are forecast to continue today and tomorrow.

Paradise: The 24-hour average in Paradise yesterday was **335** ug/m³ which is equal to an AQI of **337**. Today the AQI in Paradise is forecast to improve to **210**. At this level the air quality is rated **VERY UNHEALTHY FOR ALL PEOPLE**. Air quality in the foothill areas have a typical upslope and down slope of winds and therefore smoke during the wildfires. The past few days the foothills have seen the highest PM_{2.5} levels late in the evening through the morning hours. The best air quality hours have been in the afternoon until the late evening when the smoke returns to down slope. With the strengthening of winds, the density of smoke has lessened, resulting in an AQI below the previously hazardous levels.

Gridley: The 24-hour average in Gridley yesterday was **37** ug/m³ which is equal to an AQI of **93**. Today the AQI in Gridley is forecast to reach **45**. At this level the air quality is rated **GOOD**.

Durham: The 24-hour average in Durham yesterday was **63** ug/m³ which is equal to an AQI of **145**. Today the AQI in Durham is forecast to reach **45**. At this level the air quality is rated **GOOD**.

Oroville: There is not a PM_{2.5} monitor available in Oroville to monitor air quality. Officials recommend people use the Visibility Chart to determine smoke levels and air quality for that area. The air quality in the Oroville area today is forecast as **GOOD**.

Unhealthful air quality conditions are expected to continue in localized areas until the fires are extinguished. Information will be updated and posted to the District Web site as available at www.bcaqmd.org and recorded on the Residential Burn HOTLINE at **896-2537** or toll free at **866-240-0859**. The District office number is **891-2882 or 888-891-2882**. For questions regarding health concerns relative to the smoke from the wildfires, please contact your personal health care provider or Butte County Public Health Department at **538-7581** or visit their Web site at www.buttecounty.net/publichealth. The Butte County Public Health Department will issue a separate public health advisory. An Air Quality Index for Particle Pollution and Visibility Chart follow.

Air Quality Index (AQI): Particle Pollution and Visibility Chart

| Index Values | Levels of Health Concern | Cautionary Statements | Visibility Range in Miles |
|--------------|--------------------------------|--|---------------------------|
| 0-50 | Good | None | 10+ miles |
| 51-100* | Moderate | Unusually sensitive people should consider reducing prolonged or heavy exertion. | 5 – 10 miles |
| 101-150 | Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups | People with heart or lung disease, older adults, and children should reduce prolonged or heavy exertion. | 3 – 5 miles |
| 151-200 | Unhealthy | People with heart or lung disease, older adults, and children should avoid prolonged or heavy exertion. Everyone else should reduce prolonged or heavy exertion. | 1.5 – 2.5 miles |
| 201-300 | Very Unhealthy | People with heart or lung disease, older adults, and children should avoid all physical activity outdoors. Everyone else should avoid prolonged or heavy exertion. | 1 – 1.25 miles |
| 301-500 | Hazardous | People with heart or lung disease, older adults, and children should remain indoors and keep activity levels low. Everyone else should avoid all physical activity outdoors. | < 0.75 miles |

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