

Butte County
Air Quality Management District
AIR CARE NEWS BULLETIN

March 9, 2009

What's been happening? Over the past year District staff continues to provide public outreach regarding our wintertime air pollution problem - fine particulate matter resulting from the use of woodstoves and fireplaces. Staff presented potential measures to mitigate the pollution, and received public comments. Public comments and staff recommendations were presented at several District Governing Board meetings as well.

- At the December 11th meeting the Board adopted amendments to Rule 207, *Wood Burning Devices* and requested input from the City of Chico on proposed Rule 208, *Mandatory Wood Burning Curtailment Periods*. Rule 208 would prohibit the use of woodstoves and fireplaces on poor air quality days in the Chico Urbanized Area effective November 1, 2009.
- On December 22nd the U.S. EPA announced their final area designations for the new fine particulate standard, which included all of Butte County's urbanized areas.
- The District's voluntary **Check Before You Light** program ran from November 1st through February 28th. During this period there were 15 advisory days for the Chico area, with 19 days above the federal fine particulate standard in Chico. There were two days above the standard in Gridley and no days in Paradise above the federal standard.

What's new? At the February 26th meeting the District Governing Board considered the recommendations from the Chico City Council (Council) requesting that the Board adopt Rule 208. The Council recommended the following changes to proposed Rule 208: on mandatory no-burn days the use of EPA certified wood and pellet stoves would be allowed; add requirements for woodstoves or fireplaces that smoke excessively (a 20% opacity limit); lower the air quality threshold for determining no-burn days from the federal limit of 35 micrograms per cubic meter (ug/m³) to 25 ug/m³; expand the area subject to the rule to include densely populated areas immediately contiguous to the Chico Urbanized Area; and require review of the program effectiveness after one year to determine if the exemption for EPA certified stoves should be removed. The Council also recommended that the District take the lead in investigating a regional Air Quality Mitigation Fee

Program in which funds generated would be used as incentives to replace existing non-EPA certified woodstoves and implement other air quality mitigation efforts.

The Board directed staff to analyze and review the Chico City Council recommendations and develop modifications to proposed Rule 208 for review by the Board at a future meeting. The Board also wanted staff to evaluate grant opportunities to replace non-EPA certified woodstoves, with special emphasis on ways to assist low income families. The Board directed staff to look at the authority and importance of the District to adopt a mandatory rule versus the City of Chico taking action. What are the options?

What's next? The District staff will be reporting back to the Board, tentatively at the April 23rd meeting, regarding the analysis of Rule 208 changes and issues identified above. Staff will be providing a report on the 2008-2009 voluntary **Check Before You Light** program at the March 26th meeting.

District staff will be presenting "Burn It Cleanly" providing information on wood smoke and your health at this years Soroptimist Home, Garden & Antique Show, March 21-22, 2009 at the Silver Dollar Fair Grounds in Chico.

Staff will continue to update the District website with information on the health effects of fine particulate pollution, pollutant contributions from woodstoves and fireplaces, and tips on proper use of wood burning devices.

Why is this necessary? The residents of Butte County want healthful air, and must have the ability to heat their homes. The District is dedicated to finding solutions to balance these interests so that our communities can meet the State and federal health-based air standards.

How can I get more information? If you have questions or comments, please contact the District at 891-2882 or toll-free (888) 891-2882, or online at www.bcaqmd.org.

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