

Butte County

Air Quality Management District

AIR CARE NEWS BULLETIN

December 18, 2008

What's been happening? Over the last twelve months District staff have conducted over a dozen public workshops to provide information on the fine particulate pollution problem resulting from the use of woodstoves and fireplaces, present potential measures to mitigate the pollution, and receive public comments. The District's Governing Board considered the same information, staff recommendations regarding potential voluntary and regulatory measures, and public comments at several meetings over this period of time. At the October 23rd meeting the Board received a report from a U.S. EPA representative on the new fine particulate standard, approved the new voluntary **Check Before You Light** program and approved an updated public education program.

What's new? The new voluntary **Check Before You Light** program began November 1st. The District will release advisories the day before a forecasted poor air quality day, requesting residents not use their woodstove or fireplace unless it is their sole source of heat. Separate forecasts are made based on the Chico, Gridley and Paradise air quality monitors. Staff will be mailing educational materials to neighborhoods in the Chico area with woodstove and fireplace use on advisory days. You can get the **Check Before You Light** advisories by calling 896-2537 (toll free: 866-240-0859), go online to our home page at www.bcaqmd.org for the daily status and sign up for e-mail notifications. The District is also releasing the advisories to the local news media. To date there have been 8 advisory days for the Chico area.

At the December 11th meeting the District Governing Board took the following actions after receiving public comments:

- Approved amendments to Rule 207, *Wood Burning Devices*, including the requirement that new residential woodburning water heaters and boilers meet EPA certification standards and limiting the number of woodburning devices in new construction based on total emissions;
- Declined to approve proposed new Rule 208, *Mandatory Wood Burning Curtailment Periods*. This rule would have prohibited the use of

woodstoves and fireplaces on poor air quality days in the Chico Urbanized area effective November 2009. Since Rule 208 would affect the Chico area only, the Board requested the position of the Chico City Council on the proposed measure;

- Recommended the proposed model ordinance developed by staff for release to Butte County and the local municipalities.

What's next? The voluntary **Check Before You Light** program will continue through the end of February. Staff will present a report on the program at the March 26th Board meeting, including the forecasted advisory days, actual air quality on those days, and days where the federal fine particulate standard was exceeded. The Board will consider the need for changes to the program based on the results of this review and input from the City of 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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530-891-2882 air@bcaqmd.org

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