


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 August 17.

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 August 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, media interest in the District included the following coverage:
 - Air Quality Alert: *Noozhawk, KSBY, KEYT, Lompoc Record, and Santa Maria Times*
 - Prescribed Burns: *Santa Barbara Independent, KEYT, and Edhat*
 - October Hearing Board meeting regarding Central Coast Agriculture (same journalist): *Santa Barbara Independent, Edhat, Noozhawk, and Santa Maria Times*
 - Cruise ships: *Santa Barbara Independent*
 - Landscape Equipment Electrification Fund (LEEF) program: *KEYT*
 - Marine shipping program: *KEYT and KCLU*

Community Programs

- **LEEF Program Demo Day:** In June, the District launched the third year of our LEEF Program. The program is available to businesses, public agencies, nonprofits, schools, and non-landscaping businesses that perform in-house landscaping work to trade in gasoline- or diesel-powered landscaping equipment and purchase electric-powered equipment. Individual homeowners are not eligible to apply. The program will accept applications until November 3. Earlier this month, the District co-hosted an electric landscaping equipment demonstration day at the Orcutt Babe Ruth Fields with Oak Knolls Hardware. Eight equipment vendors were on hand to share information about their devices, and approximately 50 interested applicants attended. More information is available on our website: www.OurAir.org/LEEFProgram.
- **Santa Maria Downtown Fridays:** On September 22, the District participated in an electric vehicle showcase at the Santa Maria Downtown Fridays event to celebrate National Drive Electric Week and promote California Clean Air Day. The EV Showcase was co-hosted by the District, Central Coast Clean Cities Coalition, Sierra Club – Santa Barbara Chapter, and the Community Environmental Council and included a display of four plug-in electric vehicles (2015 Chevy Volt, 2023 Toyota RAV4 Prime, 2012 Tesla Model S, and 2022 Hyundai Ioniq 5). At the event, attendees engaged with staff and local partners about the vehicles on display, available incentive and purchase guidance programs, and the benefits of driving electric. With bilingual staff members at our booth, the District was able to engage with hundreds of people about the air quality benefits of electric vehicles and encourage attendees to sign-up for air quality alerts to track local conditions.

Interagency and Regulatory Support Efforts

- **Cannabis Advisory Updates:** Since July, the District has been conducting outreach regarding updates to its Cannabis Advisory. Updates to the Advisory include: clarification that post-harvest cannabis processing operations are subject to odor nuisance enforcement and permit requirements; new guidance on the use of Transport Refrigeration Units powered by diesel engines; updated guidance regarding odor abatement and prime electrical generators; and examples of post-harvest cannabis operations and equipment that

require a District permit. Outreach has included putting these updates on our website, (<https://www.ourair.org/cannabis/>); providing email notification to lead agencies; **notifying** permitting contacts, consultants, and facility contacts; and creating a postcard for lead agencies' inspectors and planning staff to share with project proponents. Existing post-harvest cannabis processing operations with land use approval will be given a grace period and must submit a permit application to the District on or before December 1, 2023.

- **Smoke Awareness:** This period was a busy time for outreach related to wildfire smoke and prescribed burns. Here are the items covered during this time:
 - **Community Alert Radio Show:** On September 5, the District's Public Information Officer appeared on Community Alert, a live show on KZSB-AM 1290, to talk about wildfire smoke preparedness. The District appreciated working with the Santa Barbara County Fire Safe Council to appear on the program and share information. You can find the interview here: <https://www.wildlandresidents.org/2023-shows>.
 - **Air Quality Alert:** On September 20, the District issued a countywide Air Quality Alert with Santa Barbara County Public Health. The Alert was issued due to unhealthy levels of particulate matter due to transported smoke from wildfires burning in Northern California and Oregon. The Alert was in effect for several days until conditions improved. People can sign up to receive future Alerts on the District's website: www.OurAir.org/subscribe.
 - **Fire Safe Council Lompoc event:** The Fire Safe Council hosted a wildfire preparedness event in Lompoc earlier this month. Although the District was unable to attend the event, staff provided the Fire Safe Council with an informational handout about air quality and wildfire smoke to share with event attendees.
 - **Prescribed Burns:** During this period, District staff worked with partner agencies in planning for and implementing several prescribed burns. The District worked with the Santa Barbara County Fire Department, UCSB, and tribal members to carry out a cultural prescribed burn on campus. The District also worked with County Fire on the Spaulding/Midland prescribed burn. Staff worked with the Vandenberg Space Force Base Fire Department on prescribed pile burns on base. People can sign up to receive future prescribed burn notifications on the District's website: www.OurAir.org/subscribe.

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.