

air pollution control district

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY

Agenda Date: December 19, 2019
Agenda Placement: Admin
Estimated Time: N/A
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 October 17, 2019.

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 October 17 meeting to present.

Agency Awareness

- **OurAir.org Website Revamp:** Efforts continue with website design professionals to revamp the District website to improve the navigation, maximize popular webpages for easy access, and refresh the overall look. The website will launch in the coming months.

Aeron Arlin Genet, Air Pollution Control Officer

- **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, the District received media interest on the following issues:
 - Prescribed burns: *Noozhawk, Edhat, KEYT, Santa Maria Times, Santa Ynez Valley News, and KSBY*
 - Real Fire, Maria Fire, Cave Fire: *UCSB Current, Noozhawk, KSBY, Edhat, Santa Maria Times, KEYT, Santa Barbara Independent, Yahoo News UK, Ventura County Star, and The Quint*
 - EV Charging Station program: *KEYT, KSBY, and Pacific Coast Business Times*
 - Teacher grants: *Edhat and Santa Barbara Family & Life*
 - District’s limited authority regarding odors from the growing of cannabis: *Green Entrepreneur, Noozhawk, and Carpinteria Coastal View News*

Community Programs

- **Education programs:** So far this school year, the District’s Clean Air Ambassadors program presented to approximately 240 students across six schools: Leonora Fillmore Elementary in Lompoc, Patterson Road School in Orcutt, Family Partnership Charter School in Orcutt, La Patera Elementary in Goleta, Mission Valley School in Lompoc, and William Rice Elementary in Santa Maria. Two new Ambassadors have been hired due to the popularity of the program among teachers. The Ambassadors also attended a Science Night in November at Foothill Elementary School in Goleta. In other education-related efforts, District staff also recently hosted two Santa Barbara City College environmental studies classes; students learned about various District functions and toured the monitoring lab.

Interagency and Regulatory Support Efforts:

- **Marine Shipping Program:** The 2019 program concluded in November. Fifteen companies participated, an increase from the 12 companies enrolled in the 2018 program; those 15 companies represent 75 percent of the container ship and auto carrier transits in this region. Program partners are currently calculating the program performance data and planning an awards ceremony to recognize the shipping companies. That awards ceremony will take place in the spring. More information will be provided once it is finalized.
- **Prescribed Burns:** During this time period, District staff have been coordinating with Santa Barbara County Fire Department on three prescribed burns: Righetti Ranch, BarM Ranch, and Monighetti Ranch. For every prescribed burn, the District completes a two-step public notification process: 1) a news release is issued once the burn window is identified, and 2) a follow-up advisory is issued the day before the burn occurs. In addition, portable monitoring devices (EBAMs) are temporarily installed at neighboring schools to assess potential air quality impacts from the prescribed burns. Earlier this week, the District hosted one of a series of statewide trainings for air district and other agency staff who work in the prescribed burning realm. Topics covered as part of the

training included smoke management plans, smoke modeling, community outreach, and using portable air quality monitors.

- **Wildfire Preparedness:** During this time period, the Maria Fire and Cave Fire caused smoke impacts to Santa Barbara County. As is the case with all wildfires, both incidents led to increased traffic to the District's website and to many questions from the public regarding protective actions to take to guard against smoke. District staff worked with County Public Health on messaging during both events, and is discussing outreach campaigns with Public Health staff regarding topics such as particulate matter and health, and "clean air rooms." Staff would like these campaigns to occur ahead of the next wildfire event, to serve as preparedness tips for future incidents.

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.