




Board Agenda Item

TO: Air Pollution Control District Board

FROM: Aeron Arlin Genet, Air Pollution Control Office 

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SUBJECT: Update on Public Outreach Activities

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive and file this update on District outreach activities.

BACKGROUND:

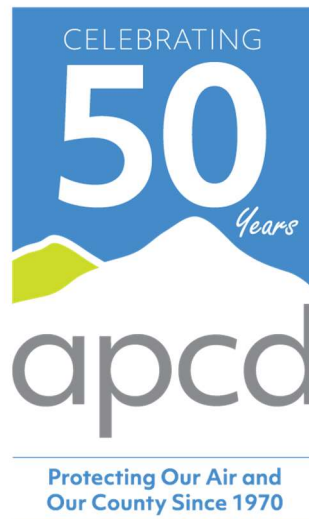
The District conducts public outreach throughout Santa Barbara County to provide air quality information. This regular agenda item will provide an update on recent outreach efforts by District staff since the previous Board meeting on August 20, 2020.

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 20 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, the District received media attention on the following issues:
 - **Smoke from California wildfires in August:** *KSBY, Noozhawk, Santa Barbara Independent, Santa Barbara News-Press, Coastal View News, and KEYT*
 - **Smoke from California wildfires in September-October:** *Santa Maria Times, Santa Barbara Independent, KEYT, KSBY, Noozhawk, Edhat, Santa Barbara News-Press, and KCLU*
 - **Prescribed burn near UCSB:** *Edhat, Noozhawk, Santa Barbara News-Press, and UCSB Current*
 - **Clean Air Grants program:** *Santa Barbara News-Press*
 - **New EV charging stations for Santa Barbara MTD:** *Edhat, KEYT, and Mass Transit Magazine*
 - **Teacher grants program:** *KEYT, Santa Barbara News-Press, and On the 101*
 - **Marine shipping program:** *Maritime Executive and American Journal of Transportation*
- **New Website:** The District recently started a “soft launch” of our new website, www.OurAir.org. This “soft launch” period provides time for staff to address any feedback received and work out any small issues as needed. Following the “soft launch,” staff will promote the new website to Santa Barbara County residents as part of a larger bilingual agency awareness campaign. Staff expects this to begin at the end of October.
- **50th Anniversary:** The District marked its 50th anniversary on September 14 and will be celebrating this milestone over the next year. Efforts include an ongoing social media campaign recognizing the agency’s history and progress, a video celebrating the District’s accomplishments and current programs, and a golf tournament under development, to occur in 2021 as public health precautions allow. The District will also be using a 50th anniversary edition of our new logo (shared below) on related materials.



Interagency and Regulatory Support Efforts

- **Smoke Messaging:** Throughout August, September, and into October, unprecedented levels and sustained bouts of wildfire smoke have affected regions up and down the West Coast, even when communities weren't experiencing any actual wildfire, including Santa Barbara County. The District has worked with the County Public Health Department during this challenging season to issue air quality alerts and other outreach as needed. A primary focus of that messaging continues to be on the importance of creating "clean air rooms" at home, as a long-term strategy for people to protect themselves against wildfire smoke by ensuring their indoor air quality is clean. During this time, the number of people following the District on social media channels grew (nearly 300 new followers on Twitter, and approximately 200 new followers on Instagram, as did the number of people subscribing to air quality alerts (nearly 1,100 new subscribers). People can subscribe to email and text alerts (the latter is a feature of the new website) on our website: www.OurAir.org/subscribe.
- **2020 Clean Air Grants outreach:** The District's annual Clean Air Grants program launched on September 8, with a 45-day application window. District staff conducted outreach prior to the launch and have continued conducting outreach; methods included issuing a news release, sharing on social media, placing posters at the Santa Barbara Harbor and providing postcards to dealers, and sending an email to approximately 600 interested entities. Another component of the outreach includes a countywide survey regarding air quality concerns. The application window closes on October 23. More information, including a link to the countywide survey, is available on our website: www.OurAir.org/grants.
- **Marine Shipping Program:** Last month, the District issued a joint news release with other partners in the Vessel Speed Reduction incentive program, recognizing the shipping companies that participated in the 2019 program. The District and program partners are using other means of recognition this year to applaud the companies for their efforts; the annual in-person awards ceremony is not possible due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- **Teacher grants program:** In September, the District – along with partners Santa Barbara County Water Agency and Santa Barbara County Education Office – announced the annual application period for the "Care for Our Earth" teacher grants. The District and Water Agency fund the grants, and the Education Office implements them. The grants are open to all K-12 teachers at public schools in the county. Both agencies wish to fund a mix of small projects and more involved, curriculum-focused projects. Applications are due on November 9. More information is available at the Education Office website: https://www.sbceo.org/domain/118#Care_for_Our_Earth_Grants.

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.