



Agenda Item: F-3
Agenda Date: January 20, 2022
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 December 16, 2021.

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 December 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:
 - Prescribed burns: *KEYT*, *KSBY*, and *Edhat*
- **New Spanish Webpage:** During this time period, the District launched a [Spanish version](#) of our popular “Today’s Air Quality” webpage. Now in English and Spanish, this webpage uses Air Quality Index (AQI) values and colors to show both the current AQI for each pollutant measured at each monitoring station, as well as a rolling previous 24 hours’ worth of readings for each pollutant at each station. Our three-day air quality forecast is also included on this webpage, as well as links to popular external tools (some of which are only available in English at this time) and an explanatory guide to understanding the AQI. The District will be promoting this resource to Spanish-speaking Santa Barbara County residents, along with other [Spanish website resources](#), as part of our ongoing efforts to promote online resources.

Community Programs

- **Clean Air Ambassadors Program:** The District’s popular Clean Air Ambassadors education program — highlighted at the [May 2021 Board meeting](#) — has been returning to classrooms this school year, after taking a pause in 2020 when schools turned to remote learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Recently, the Ambassadors revisited El Camino Elementary in the Goleta Union School District, presenting two lessons to a different first grade class than they visited earlier this school year. The program focuses air quality lessons for grades K-3. More information about the program, including how teachers can request a visit from the Ambassadors, can be found on the District’s website: <https://www.ourair.org/clean-air-ambassadors-program/>.

Interagency and Regulatory Support Efforts

- **Prescribed Burns:** During this period, District staff continued to coordinate with Santa Barbara County Fire Department on a planned prescribed pile burn project in the Painted Cave area. The District also coordinated with U.S. Forest Service officials for their annual series of prescribed pile burns on forest lands. For prescribed burns, the District works with fire partners to complete 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. As needed, portable air quality monitors are installed nearby to monitor for any smoke impacts to surrounding areas. The District is also working on an infographic about the benefits of prescribed burns, and our process working with fire agencies.

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.