

Board Agenda Item

TO: Air Pollution Control District Board

FROM: Aeron Arlin Genet, Air Pollution Control Officer 

CONTACT: Lyz Bantilan, Public Information Officer, (805) 979-8283

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 March 17, 2022.

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 March 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:
 - Marine Shipping Program Brand Ambassador Initiative: *Edhat* and *Supply Chain Dive*
 - Community Environmental Council's CARB grant: *Edhat*, *Santa Maria Times*, and *Noozhawk*
 - Prescribed burns: *Edhat*, *KEYT*, *KCLU*, *Santa Barbara Independent*, *KSBY*, and *Santa Barbara News-Press*
 - Cruise ships in Santa Barbara: *Edhat*, *Santa Barbara Independent*, and *Coastal View News*
 - Lompoc's solar-powered EV charging stations: *KEYT*, *KSBY*, *Noozhawk*, *Santa Barbara News-Press*, *Santa Ynez Valley News*, and *Edhat*
 - Wildfire Smoke Clean Air Centers for Vulnerable Populations Incentive Pilot Program: *Edhat*
- **Earth Day Events:** The District was excited to participate in two in-person Earth Day events on April 23, in Santa Barbara and Guadalupe. At each event, District staff shared information about air quality and health, wildfire smoke preparedness tips, our website resources, and ways to stay informed about District news and Air Quality Alerts. We had an art project for kids to help us create a collage for our office. At the Guadalupe event, we also worked with the Promotores Network to ask participants in our Clean Air Rooms Pilot Program to complete a brief survey about their experience with the program; we will be continuing to work on surveying program participants.
- **New Phone Numbers:** The District has new direct lines for all staff, as well as for all our phone lines, including our main phone number and Complaints line. Making this change provided the opportunity for cost savings to the District and allows staff greater flexibility with our hybrid-remote work environment. All our previous phone numbers will be forwarding to the new numbers for a period of time, but the District has been conducting outreach to strongly encourage members of the public, regulated sources, and partners to update our contact information to reflect our new phone numbers. The staff directory on our website reflects this change: www.OurAir.org/apcd/apcd-staff-directory/
- **E-newsletter:** The District issued a bilingual e-newsletter in April to approximately 1,900 subscribers. People can sign up to receive future news and alerts on the District website: www.OurAir.org/subscribe. Articles in the April edition covered the following topics:
 - Our new phone numbers
 - Congratulating Joel Cordes and Juliet Fernandez on their recent retirements
 - Our upcoming Clean Air Grants program
 - A recap of the January and March Board of Directors meetings
 - Remembering retired staff member Janice Robinson, who recently passed away
 - Information about visiting our Earth Day booths in Santa Barbara and Guadalupe

Community Programs

- **Clean Air Rooms Pilot Program Waiting List:** The District has sent letters (in English and Spanish) to the Guadalupe and Casmalia residents who placed their names on our Clean Air Rooms Pilot Program waiting list. The letters provide information about how those individuals can pick up their air purifier at our new Santa Maria office on designated dates in May and June.
- **Wildfire Smoke Clean Air Centers for Vulnerable Populations Incentive Pilot Program:** The District issued a news release earlier this month regarding the availability of funding for a regional clean air center. The funding comes from a pilot program being administered by CAPCOA; there is \$925,000 in total funding for 12 identified regions in the state, with Santa Barbara County and Ventura County together making up one of the 12 regions. Applicants can choose to apply for one of these project types: 1) HVAC upgrades, 2) high-efficiency air filter purchases, or 3) portable air purifier purchases. Facilities located in low-income or disadvantaged communities are encouraged to apply. Entities that receive funds will need to make their facility publicly available as a “clean air center” during wildfire smoke incidents. Applications are due June 30, and the District is available to help interested parties with their applications. More information is on our website: www.OurAir.org/050522-news.

Interagency and Regulatory Support Efforts

- **Prescribed Burns:** During this period, District staff continued to coordinate with the Santa Barbara County Fire Department on ongoing prescribed pile burn projects in the Painted Cave and Trout Club areas. 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.
- **Marine Shipping Program:** Earlier this month, the District issued a joint news release with our Marine Shipping Program partners regarding results from the 2021 program, as well as information on the 2022 program, now underway. More information is available on the program website: www.BlueWhalesBlueSkies.org

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.