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Air District, OCA kick off woodstove change-out ***Old stoves for new stoves in cash incentive program***

Feb. 4 – The program beginning today offers San Joaquin Valley air basin residents hundreds of dollars to change out their old, polluting woodstoves and fireplace inserts with cleaner models.

Through the Burn Cleaner Fireplace and Woodstove Change-out program, sponsored by Operation Clean Air and the Valley Air District, residents in the eight-county Air District can apply for vouchers to be used toward the purchase of cleaner natural gas or propane stoves and fireplace inserts.

The program starts Feb. 4 and applications for vouchers will be accepted until April 30, or until funds are expended, on a first-come, first-served basis.

Particulate pollution from older woodstoves and inserts is a significant contributor to wintertime air pollution in the Valley. Officials with both organizations project the cash incentive – \$350 for a natural gas or propane stove or insert – will motivate people who have been considering upgrading their stove or insert to make a change.

“These devices can be very expensive so we hope that this program will encourage people to make the investment in a cleaner, lower-polluting model,” said Jaime Holt, chief communications officer for the Air District. “Our Valley skies will certainly benefit from it.”

“OCA is committed to seeing clean air in the San Joaquin Valley and this program is a great way for Valley residents to get involved,” said Hal Bolen, chairman of Operation Clean Air.

A total of \$108,000 is available to fund about 300 projects.

To be eligible, an applicant must be a full-time resident of the Valley air basin and the project must be located within the air basin (San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Merced, Madera, Fresno, Kings, Tulare and portions of Kern counties). Application forms and supporting materials are available at www.valleyair.org and District offices beginning Feb. 4.

Vouchers may be used at one of several participating retailers, who will oversee installation of the new device and will confirm the old device was replaced or removed and destroyed. The \$350 incentive is available for any resident upgrading from a wood or pellet device (including an open hearth wood burning fireplace) to a natural gas or propane stove or insert.

For more information about the program or to apply, residents can visit www.valleyair.org or call a District office in Fresno (1990 E. Gettysburg Ave., 559-230-6000); Bakersfield (2700 M St., Ste. 275, 661-326-6900); or Modesto (4800 Enterprise Way, 209-557-6400).