

Forecast triggers Spare the Air alert

The Stockton Record

June 25, 2003

A Spare the Air alert has been called for today and Thursday in San Joaquin County because of forecasts of heavily polluted air.

Residents are encouraged to find ways to cut down on emissions. That can include walking to work, putting off errands that require driving and not using polluting products such as lighter fluid or aerosol cans.

Levels of ground-level ozone, also called smog, are expected to be unhealthy for small children and adults with breathing problems. Residents are encouraged to spend as little time as possible outdoors.

Today's alert was called because of unhealthy smog levels predicted in the Bay Area. Valley air regulators often call Spare the Air alerts when neighboring air basins are expected to have Spare the Air Days.

However, light winds and hotter temperatures forecast for Thursday are expected to worsen pollution in the San Joaquin Valley.

Anthony Presto, a spokesman for the Valley Air Pollution Control District, said the high temperatures -- not pollution blowing over from the Bay Area -- will cause the even-higher Valley pollution levels Thursday.

Smog worsens on hot days, because the sunlight and temperatures cook the unhealthy brew of emissions.

Opinion

The Fresno Bee

Smokeless in Reedley

The smoking lamp is definitely out in some public areas.

June 25, 2003

Reedley's ban on smoking in parks, recreational areas, playgrounds and sports facilities can be viewed either as a logical step in protecting children or as a regulation gone too far.

We side with those who favor the ban and believe the law will be the impetus for common-sense self-policing. Violation of the ban, one of the strictest in the nation, would be a misdemeanor under the ordinance, carrying a fine up to \$1,000 or a jail sentence not to exceed six months -- a stiff penalty, some would argue, out of proportion to the crime. Maybe. However, the odds of a smoker being prosecuted are slim.

Rather, the ban -- made known with no-smoking signs -- will offer support for those seeking smoke-free environments and enlightenment for smokers to step away from or outside of affected parks and areas to light up. Generally, this is how these types of laws play out.

For example, Kings Canyon Unified School District based in Reedley banned smoking from its stadiums and other sports areas a few years ago with few problems. Smokers by and large comply and move away from smoke-free areas. Reedley city officials are understandably hopeful that this ban will have the same effect.

Trying to legislate common sense and courtesy is always tricky. The lack of consideration by a small number of people is often the genesis of such ordinances. One person's urging of common sense and courtesy is another's intrusion of rights. This smoking ban, whether one agrees or disagrees with it, defines the rules and makes self-policing a clearer and simpler task.

Reedley's ban on smoking in parks and other recreation facilities is sensible. Practical enforcement should be uneventful.

Letters

The Porterville Recorder

We've been hearing about air for a while

John Keyes, Springville

June 25, 2003

I do appreciate The Recorder's articles concerning the "air quality" in our area. But when is the "sky is falling" syndrome going to stop concerning our air in the Valley?

Since the 1970s, if not longer, this scare tactic of using asthma and other respiratory sufferers as poster children to make people feel bad concerning our air is getting old.

Yes. Asthma is not fun. Hay fever is not fun. But again to use this tactic again by the EPA to make the public cut back on use, and their quality of living, for another onslaught on progress is ludicrous.

How many more regulations do we have to have to make the EPA happy?

We have a gas additive that is supposed to make our air better. But what do we get? Water contamination, and ugly looking ducks with two heads and other weird looking water fowl.

More smog tests. What has this given the public? More articles on how bad our air quality is in the Valley; plus another expense for more smog control devices on our cars.

Electric Cars: These are nice on the golf course. But are they practical?

The San Joaquin Valley has dust. We have dust because we are an agricultural area. Where is the science to prove there is an increase in the so called evil word: Ozone.

How many more restrictions do we need? How about outlawing cars and using horses and buggies like they did in the 1800s? Would this make the anti progress crowd happy?

These regulations from the EPA, are by the same folks, with the same mind set, who gave us the topic: The Spotted Owl is endangered. Proven false.

MID to buy pollution credits for plant

By TIM MORAN
Roger VanHoy
The Modesto Bee

June 25, 2003

The Modesto Irrigation District agreed Tuesday to spend \$6.84 million for air pollution credits. The credits, purchased from industries that have improved their emissions, will allow the district to run its older McClure generating plant for more hours and can be "banked" for use with future projects, said MID senior electrical engineer Steve Hill.

The credits are likely to get more expensive in the future, and any credits not used at McClure could be set aside and used for another project, said , MID's assistant general manager of electric resources.

The district's long-range plan calls for developing a 500 megawatt plant in 2007, with the output to be shared with a partner. That plant will need more air credits than the MID is purchasing now, VanHoy said.

"I'm viewing this as moving money out of one bank account and into another," board member Chuck Billington said.

The McClure plant, built in the early 1980s, is a twin turbine, 120-megawatt generator that can run on either natural gas or diesel fuel. Because of its age and the level of air pollution it produces, McClure is restricted to running 877 hours per year.

The district is planning a \$16 million upgrade of the McClure plant that will reduce nitrogen oxide emissions from 42 parts per million to 5 parts per million running on natural gas.

That will let the district run McClure 900 to 1,500 hours per year. The air emissions credits would allow McClure to get a permit to run up to 8,760 hours with natural gas.

It is unlikely the plant would ever be run that much, VanHoy said, because it is a less efficient, costlier plant to run. The district could normally buy cheaper power on the market.

Buying the credits leaves open the option of running the plant longer if the electricity market spikes again, and allows the district to use them on other projects or sell them if they are not used for McClure.

In other action, the board approved an environmental report on two substations proposed to serve northeast Modesto and Riverbank.

One would be built east of Roselle Avenue near Minniear Road, just south of Riverbank, and the other near the intersection of Coffee and Claribel roads.