

ON THE

AIR

Winter
2005

A Newsletter about
Clean Air. Provided
by Spokane County
Air Pollution
Control Authority
(SCAPCA)

Vehicle Emissions Repair & Replacement Programs

Programs' success at achieving cost effective, long term emissions reductions lauded

In just over three years, over 950 of Spokane's highest emitting motor vehicles have been repaired or replaced under two programs—the Vehicle Emission Repair Program (VERP) and the Voluntary Accelerated Vehicle Replacement program (VAVR).

These programs have reduced approximately 235 tons of air pollutants by providing low-income motorists financial

aid to repair or replace vehicles that fail state emissions standards. Both programs, funded by legal settlements and as environmental offset projects, are coordinated by SCAPCA, the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) and Spokane Neighborhood Action Programs (SNAP).

Under VERP, low-income motorists can apply for up to \$500 toward vehicle emissions repairs. Normally, under the

state's Emissions Check Program, when an automobile fails an emissions test, after its owner has spent \$150 or more on repair work, a waiver is offered, regardless of whether the emission system is effectively repaired.

The certified repair shops perform the repairs at close to cost, then submit the bill for verification and payment by SNAP. If the necessary repairs are more substantial and essentially exceed the car's value, low-income motorists may apply for funds available through the Voluntary Accelerated Vehicle Replacement program (VAVR).

The option for utilizing VAVR comes into play when the car is deemed not repairable by one of the participating repair shops. If this is the case, the program will offer up to \$2,000 to the low-income driver for a replacement car in better condition, provided the driver can

match with \$1,000. In the interim, the participant takes a class offered by SNAP to improve their skills in selecting and maintaining a used vehicle.

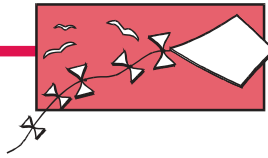
“These programs have helped low income individuals and families—some on social security or disabled—who would otherwise be unable to repair their cars to meet the state emissions standards,” said Terri Stoflet, program coordinator for SNAP.

David Lund, a VAVR participant, says that “without the program, my limited options included either paying hundreds of dollars to have the car fixed, or selling it to the junkyard for pennies of what I paid, and then buying another run down vehicle. Both of these alternatives involved money that I didn't have.”



David Lund qualified for the Voluntary Accelerated Vehicle Replacement Program, enabling him to secure matching funds to replace his unrepairable vehicle with a car in better condition.

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Vehicle Emissions Repair & Replacement Programs

Continued from cover page

The air quality benefits of these programs are significant, including reduced levels of carbon monoxide, hydrocarbons, and nitrogen oxides which contribute to the formation of ground-level ozone (smog). Additional benefits of both the VERP and VAVR programs include:

- ✓ **Long term emissions reductions** The repaired and replaced vehicles meet Washington State emission standards, and the unrepairable vehicles are scrapped.
- ✓ **Cost effective emissions reductions.** The typical Best Available Control Technology cost to reduce one ton of air pollutants for a new

industrial facility is \$5,000. VERP cost is 80% lower, at a cost of \$1,098 per ton of emissions reduced. **Approximately 235 tons of air emissions have been reduced to date.**

- ✓ **High repair rate.** Ninety-seven percent of the cars that qualified for repairs under VERP, were effectively repaired. **About 950 vehicles have been repaired or replaced to date.**

Because of the program's success, SNAP is seeking additional funding to continue the program. According to Stoflet, the current funding will continue the program until this summer.

"Our goal is to collect \$25,000 in local contributions that will enable us to apply for matching funds from government and foundation sources," said Stoflet.

"Additional funding will continue the program another year, resulting in potentially 70 tons of additional emissions reductions and 300 vehicles repaired for low income families," added Stoflet.

For additional information, contact:

Eric Skelton, 477-4727, ext. 121, or epskelton@scapca.org.

Terri Stoflet, SNAP, 456-7174, or email stoflet@snapwa.org. ■

Air toxics study underway

To better quantify toxic pollutants in Spokane's air, a team of state, local and university air quality specialists has launched a study of Spokane's air. Over the next 12 months, air quality samples will be collected at four monitoring sites in the area.

Toxic air pollutants are harmful substances in the air that come from natural and manmade sources. Spokane is impacted by a variety of activities that emit toxic pollutants, including gasoline storage, transfer and refueling; commercial and industrial operations, motor vehicles, outdoor burning, etc.

Breathing toxic air pollutants increases the risk of experiencing health problems. For example, benzene fumes are given off when you pump gas into your car, and exposure to benzene is linked

to an increased incidence of leukemia.

Until now, our knowledge of air toxics in Spokane's air has been based on emissions data (actual and estimated) from a variety of sources and predictions of concentrations, based on complex computer modeling. With this new study, air monitoring will provide data on specific air toxics and their actual concentrations found in the ambient air.

The study will track occurrences and concentrations of several air toxics, including volatile organic compounds such as benzene, ethylene dibromide, and formaldehyde, and several toxic metals that cling to tiny particles in the air.

The metals studied will include arsenic, cadmium, lead and others.



Air Quality Technician Mark Rowe, collects data from an air sampler located near Ferry & Freya, home to new, state-of-the-art air toxics monitoring equipment.

For over 30 years, air quality monitoring in Spokane focused on a small group of pollutants prevalent in the ambient air, called *criteria* pollutants, such as particulate matter, carbon monoxide, and ozone. Monitoring of criteria pollutants in the Spokane area will continue.

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Air toxics study

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Results of this study will provide researchers with a better understanding of where and when toxic pollution is highest, where most of it comes from, and how toxic pollutants affect the health of citizens.

The four air toxics monitoring sites:

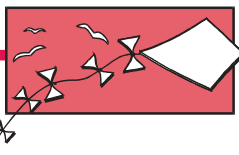
- ◆ Freya & Ferry (pictured below)



- ◆ Hillyard area
-both of these locations represent "mixed-use," including industrial and commercial activities, and traffic.
- ◆ Millwood area: reflects air quality conditions in a neighborhood setting that is in proximity to commercial activities.
- ◆ Spokane Regional Health Building: represents city-center conditions.

Washington State Department of Ecology manages the project in cooperation with SCAPCA, WSU, UW, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

For more information about this study, call Ron Edgar at 477-4727, ext # 111. For more information about Air Toxics, visit EPA's Air Toxics webpage at www.epa.gov/air/toxicair/index.html



Avista Recipient of 2005 Clean Air Award

Avista Corporation is the recipient of the 2005 Clean Air Award, presented by SCAPCA, at a recent ceremony in Spokane.

"Avista Corporation is recognized for their recent air pollution control system upgrades to their Northeast Combustion Turbine facility, located in north Spokane and for their partnership in developing two programs, the effect of which has been to repair or replace over 950 of Spokane's highest emitting motor vehicles, resulting in a reduction of approximately 235 tons of air emissions to date," said Eric Skelton, SCAPCA Director.

The Northeast Combustion Turbine facility has been operated by Avista since 1978. Until 2000, it was only used sporadically to help meet peak electricity demand. However, in 2000, when an energy crisis hit the Western U.S., Avista needed to temporarily operate the turbines as base-load power generation units. SCAPCA and Avista entered into an agreement, allowing Avista to operate the turbines extended hours during the energy crisis. In exchange, Avista agreed to upgrade the air pollution control system on the turbines and to implement a project to offset the excess emissions, resulting from extend operation. In 2001, Avista installed oxidation catalysts on the turbines, which reduced carbon monoxide emissions by 95%.

Other design changes reduced nitrogen oxide emissions from the turbines by over 25%.



Pictured from left to right: Pam Kish, Doug Pottratz, Thomas C. Dempsey of Avista Corporation; Eric Skelton, SCAPCA Director; and Hank Nelson of Avista Corporation.

In order to offset the excess emissions that occurred during the energy crisis, Avista implemented a number of environmental offset projects. Avista formulated a partnership with SCAPCA, the Department of Ecology, Spokane Neighborhood Action Programs, and approximately 20 local auto repair shops to develop and implement two programs: the Vehicle Emission Repair Program (VERP) and the Voluntary Accelerated Vehicle Replacement program (VAVR). Both of these programs are featured in this issue.

"The Clean Air Award is presented to publicly express our appreciation for innovation and to encourage others to follow suit," added Skelton.

Congratulations to Avista Corporation, the 2005 Clean Air Award recipient, for your hard work and dedication to improve air quality in our community! ■

◆ AIR QUALITY CALENDAR ◆

- Feb. 3: SCAPCA Board of Directors meetings are held the first Thursday of each month, at 9 a.m., unless otherwise publicized. Meetings are held in the lower level, Spokane County Public Works Building, 1026 W. Broadway Ave. Meeting agendas are posted on SCAPCA's website: www.scapca.org.
- Feb. 28: End of the 5-month oxygenated fuel season in Spokane County.
- Apr. 1-4 & Apr. 8-11: The eight designated days in 2005, allocated for yard and garden debris burning, only for eligible county residents. For details, contact SCAPCA at 477-4727, or visit www.scapca.org/burning.
- Apr. 9: Chipping, Composting & Burn Barrel Turn-In Event, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m., at Spokane County Fire Protection District 4, Station # 49, Hwy 395 & Monroe. For details, call 477-4727. Sponsors: SCAPCA, Spokane Regional Solid Waste System, Fire District # 4, WA Department of Natural Resources, and The Master Composters.

Update: Washington Clean School Bus Program

The Washington Clean School Bus Program is improving air quality for our children by reducing their exposure to harmful diesel exhaust. The funding provided by our legislature over the next five years will clean up about 5,000 of our state's 9,000 school buses.

Locally, SCAPCA is administering the program and has currently signed on 10 of our 14 school districts which have been or are in the process of being retrofitted with oxidation catalysts, which are similar to catalytic converters on passenger cars. The devices clean the exhaust before it leaves the tailpipe.

Diesel exhaust contains fine particles and more than 40 substances that are classified as "hazardous." Because these particles are microscopic, they become trapped in the small airways of the lungs when inhaled. Studies have linked exposure to diesel exhaust to respiratory and cardiovascular problems and to increased risk of

Thanks to our Legislature, emissions controls on our school buses will reduce toxic diesel emissions by 50-90%.

developing lung cancer. Information about the health risks associated with diesel exhaust is available on the internet at:

- ✓ U.S. EPA: www.epa.gov/air/toxicair/index.html
- ✓ American Lung Association: www.lungsusa.org.

Take Note!

On the Air is a quarterly publication of the Spokane County Air Pollution Control Authority. Its purpose is to educate local citizens on all aspects of outdoor air pollution.

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Air Quality Index:
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2005 Board of Directors:

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- Michele Pope, Member-at-Large, Vice Chair
- Mike Brewer, City of Spokane Representative
- Phil Harris, Spokane County Commissioner
- Todd Mielke, Spokane County Commissioner

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