

ON THE AIR

Spring/
Summer
2007

A Newsletter about
Clean Air. Provided
by Spokane Regional
Clean Air Agency.

Introducing: Spokane Regional Clean Air Agency

In June, the Spokane County Air Pollution Control Authority became the Spokane Regional Clean Air Agency. So, why the name change? After all, it's worked fine for nearly 40 years.

"The new name is more reflective of our agency's mission and programs. The new logo features city and county landmarks and our tagline, "working with you for clean air," promotes the community's role in improving and maintaining clean, healthy air," according to Bill Dameworth, Director.

When the agency began its work in 1969, the primary focus was on controlling the emissions from industrial operations. Over the years, as industry has installed new control technology equipment, emissions from this category have been reduced drastically, to less than 20% of the air pollution in Spokane. Today, all of us, collectively, are the biggest source of pollution, with more than half coming from vehicles.

"The new name should clear up any confusion that the agency is a department of Spokane County, when in reality, it is a separate, governmental entity, serving all of the incorporated cities and towns and the unincorporated areas of Spokane County," added Dameworth.

Spokane Clean Air is one of eight local clean air agencies in Washington state, established under the 1967 Washington State Clean Air Act.

Although SCAPCA was a frequently used acronym, the Spokane Regional Clean Air Agency plans to use "Spokane Clean Air" as a shortened version of the full name, to avoid the use of an acronym.

In addition to the name change, the agency's logo and website have also been updated. The new logo was inspired by a winning entry in a logo design contest.

The agency is still located in the Spokane Regional Health District building and its phone numbers remain unchanged. ■



Spokane Clean Air is governed by a 5-member Board of Directors:

City of Spokane: Jeff Corkill,
Chair of the Board

City of Spokane Valley:
Mike DeVleming, City
Councilmember, Vice-Chair of
the Board

Small Cities & Towns: Matthew
Pederson, Mayor of Airway
Heights

Spokane County: Commissioner
Bonnie Mager

Member-at-Large: Melissa Ahern

For more information about
Spokane Clean Air, please visit
us at www.spokanecleanair.org or
call 477-4727.

working with you for clean air

Ozone: The Summer Air Pollutant

by Stephanie Childs, Communications Intern

Summer is here—with all its familiar sounds, smells, and sights. One sight not missed over the long winter months is the smoggy, hazy summer sky. What is that brownish haze that sits over our lilac city? It's smog—a combination of fine particles and ground-level ozone.

Known as the "summer air pollutant," ground-level ozone is created by a photochemical reaction between nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compounds in the presence of sunlight. Although Spokane is currently in attainment of all federal air quality standards, the area is experiencing a slow but steady upward trend in ground-level ozone.

Most ozone-forming pollutants come from daily activities, with nearly two-thirds from motor vehicles. Other sources include industrial and consumer products (paints, solvents, etc.)

Ozone in the air we breathe is a danger to human, animal and plant life. Even at low concentrations, exposure to this pollutant has been linked to

chest pains, coughing, throat irritation and congestion.

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) healthy adults can experience a 15-20 percent reduction in lung function from prolonged exposure to low levels of ozone.

Ground-level ozone poses a particular health concern for children because their lungs are still developing and they often play outdoors for extended periods of time. Studies show that exposure to ozone may cause severe obstructive pulmonary diseases, such as chronic bronchitis, emphysema and asthma.

In addition to its negative impacts, ground-level ozone creates a substantial detriment to vegetation and ecosystems. In the U.S. it is responsible for \$500 million in reduced crop production each year.

Acknowledging the increasing ground-level ozone problem, now, is the first step. Each citizen must realize that their actions directly impact our air quality. Are you making clean air choices? For ideas, see box on right. ■

You Can Help:

- **Mow Down Pollution: Go Electric!** Consider switching to electric or manual-powered lawn equipment.
- **Park the Car!** Walk, ride your bike, take the bus or carpool instead of driving alone. If you must drive, combine errands to reduce your car trips.
- **Read labels!** Avoid purchasing and using solvent-based household products. When cleaning, try natural products, such as water, vinegar and baking soda.
- **Refuel in the evening!** This helps keep ozone-forming vapors out of the air during the heat of the day. Also, opt for gas stations that use vapor recovery nozzles, including Costco, Safeway, Albertsons.
- **Barbecue Smart!** If you use a charcoal barbecue, start it with an electric probe instead of lighter fluid. Or, invest in a cleaner-burning natural gas or propane grill.



The Lawnmower Gets a Makeover

Smoky lawnmowers may be a thing of the past.

To help thwart summertime air pollution, the U.S. EPA has proposed more stringent emission standards on most lawn and garden equipment.

Lawnmowers and other gas-powered tools account for approximately 10 percent of summertime smog-

forming emissions. EPA believes placing more stringent regulations on these tools would potentially cut their emissions by 35 percent.

The current proposal applies to engines under 25 horsepower, which includes most walk-behind and riding lawnmowers. In order to cut their emissions, catalytic converters would likely be added to the mowers, increasing their price by an

estimated 18 percent. California has enacted similar regulations under the Clean Air Act. If passed, the new emissions control would take effect, nationally, in 2011 and 2012. The new restrictions would only apply to new engines.

"These standards are long overdue but they will be absolutely essential in order to help many parts of the country meet public-health standard," said Frank O'Donnell, president of Clean Air Watch. ■

Safe Disposal: Compact Fluorescent Lights

Fluorescent lights are far more energy efficient than their incandescent cousins. However, most fluorescent tubes and bulbs contain mercury and should be disposed of properly. Energy-saving compact fluorescent



lamps (CFLs) can help reduce air pollution, but users need to know how to deal with them at their end of life.

If a fluorescent bulb package says “Mercury” or “Hg”, the bulbs contain mercury. Mercury is a “heavy metal” that can be hazardous to human health and the environment.

Mercury can easily evaporate and travel long distances in the atmosphere, falling to the soil and into the water during precipitation. When mercury-containing products, such as fluorescent lamps, are placed in the household trash, the bulbs can easily get broken, releasing mercury into the

Please remember—fluorescent bulbs shouldn’t be placed in garbage cans or curbside recycling bins.

environment. One broken fluorescent bulb can contaminate 7,000 gallons of water with mercury.

For residential customers, fluorescent bulbs (and other household items containing mercury) can be safely disposed in the Household Hazardous

Waste section at Transfer Stations and the Waste to Energy Facility. Disposal is free. For directions and hours of operation, call 625-6800.

Du-Mor Recycling and Earthworks Recycling centers also accept fluorescent bulbs for disposal. There is a charge for this service.

For businesses needing information on safe disposal options for fluorescent lights and other items containing mercury, contact the Recycling Hotline at 625-6800. ■

New this summer!

Avista is hosting energy conservation events for their residential customers. During these events, a limited supply of compact fluorescent lights (CFLs) and other giveaways will be distributed to customers free of charge. For event dates and locations, look for schedules in your local newspaper or events calendars. And, look for discount coupons for CFLs in your Avista bills this summer!

Air Monitoring Expanding

by Stephanie Childs, Intern

Residents of Airway Heights, Deer Park, Liberty Lake, and Spokane Valley will soon be able to track air quality in their own “backyards.”

Spokane Regional Clean Air Agency’s (Spokane Clean Air) network of air monitoring sites will soon expand to these areas, bringing the number of monitoring sites to eight.

“The new sites will provide important data on what the air is like in the outlying communities of the Spokane Metro area,” said Ron Edgar, Chief of Technical Services for Spokane Clean Air.

A particular emphasis will be placed on wood burning in the Deer Park

area and smoke infiltrating Liberty Lake by way of Idaho, added Edgar.

Using telemetry, a technology that allows the remote measurement and reporting of information, data from the three new sites will eventually be displayed on Spokane Clean Air’s website for residents to access.

Air monitoring sites are typically funded by the agency’s general budget and special grants. However, the capital cost of these new sites is being funded with money collected from a large civil penalty. Once the sites are built, the operating costs will be paid by the agency’s general operating fund and special grants.

The new air monitoring sites will measure fine particles that are less



Mark Rowe, Air Quality Technician, reviews data at an air monitoring site.

than 2.5 microns in diameter. Particulate matter of this size is most commonly associated with combustion-related motor vehicles, wood burning, open burning and industrial processes.

“The new sites should be up-and-running by fall, in time for the wood heating season,” Edgar said.

“This is the first real expansion of our monitoring network in about 20 years,” Edgar said. ■

◆ AIR QUALITY CALENDAR ◆

- Jul. 12: Board of Directors meeting (rescheduled from its regular date of July 5) at 9 a.m., in Rooms 320-321 of the Spokane Regional Health District, 1101 W. College Ave. Agendas and minutes are posted at www.spokanecleanair.org.
- Aug. 2: Board of Directors meeting, 9 a.m., Lower Level, Commissioners Hearing Room, Spokane County Public Works Bldg, 1026 W. Broadway Ave.
- Aug. 11: Kids Day at Riverfront Park. Stop by Spokane Clean Air's booth and participate in some fun activities.

Mager and Ahern Join Agency's Board of Directors

The two newest members of the Spokane Regional Clean Air Agency's Board of Directors are Melissa Ahern, Ph.D, MBA, and Spokane County Commissioner Bonnie Mager.

Ahern was appointed by the Board of Directors to fill the Member-at-Large position. She is an Associate Professor at Washington State University, Spokane, Department of Health Policy and Administration.

"As a health economist, I am knowledgeable about the broad determinants of health, including air and water quality, and issues associated with toxicity in the environment," stated Ahern. "I believe that I can make a significant contribution to the Board in assuring the air quality of the greater

Spokane area by providing information regarding the short- and long-term economic impacts of issues related to air quality."

Bonnie Mager, Spokane County Commissioner, joined the Board in February.

"It has been almost twenty years now that I have been involved with and an advocate for a healthy environment and clean air and water in particular," said Mager.

"In my mind there is nothing more important to our community than a healthy place to live. I look forward to working on the quality of our air by serving on the board," added Mager.

Take Note!

On the Air is a publication of the Spokane Regional Clean Air Agency. Its purpose is to inform local residents on all aspects of outdoor air pollution.

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Board of Directors:

- Jeff Corkill, City of Spokane Representative, Chair
- Mike DeVleming, City of Spokane Valley Councilmember, Vice Chair
- Matthew Pederson, Small Cities and Towns Representative
- Melissa Ahern, Member-at-Large
- Bonnie Mager, Spokane County Commissioner

Mailing List:

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