

ON THE AIR

Summer
2005

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

Mead School District Puts the Brakes on Diesel Exhaust

Mead School District bus drivers and students have already noticed a marked difference in the smell of bus fumes on cold winter mornings, thanks to a relatively new program that pays for the retrofit of school buses with emission control devices.

Senate Bill 6072, passed in 2003, helped fund the project. The money has helped to speed up a retrofit process which would have proceeded very slowly if at all, if the school districts had to fund the upgrades through their own resources.

“All buses are going to operate as efficiently as we can make them,” Lewis

said. “We were lucky to tap into the funds that the Legislature allowed.”

Lewis has overseen the District’s diesel bus retrofit program in which 80 percent of their fleet has been retrofitted with catalytic mufflers. These mufflers help prevent exhaust emissions from getting inside the bus or in the surrounding air.

In addition, re-circulating crank case filters have been added to most of the same buses to capture the crank case gases and return them before sending the gases out of the tailpipe. The District also implemented a “no idling” policy.

“Cutting down on bus idling will save money for the school district,” said Jack Lewis, Mead’s Director of Transportation. “However, we were after the clean air more than any other

“We want our kids breathing the cleanest air they can.”

Jack Lewis, Mead School District

reason. We want our kids breathing the cleanest air they can.”

The retrofit covered the first phase of fleet buses built between 1986 and 1995. Sixty buses were fitted with new catalytic mufflers, plus the crank case filters in the timeframe of half a school year. As the program proceeds,



Mead School District is one of the first in Washington state to use the crank case filters on their buses.

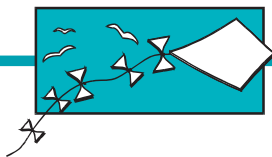
later model buses will be retrofitted with state-of-the-art controls.

Mead School District is one of the first in Washington State to use the crank case filters and considering the miles of roads traveled by school buses within the Mead District, it helps address the air pollution problem in the immediate area.

All public school districts in the state are benefiting from the funds provided by the Legislature, as they move forward with retrofitting their buses with the appropriate control devices.

For more information about school bus retrofits in Spokane County, call SCAPCA at (509) 477-4727.

*Article by Laura VanDerLinde,
SCAPCA Communications Intern*



Summer's Hot Temps = Ozone Pollution

As summer temperatures rise into the 90s, Spokane's skies can become "hazy" or "smoggy." What people typically call "smog" is primarily made up of ground-level ozone—the "bad" ozone. Unlike the "good" ozone found in the upper atmosphere, the "bad" ozone (commonly known as smog) occurs near the earth's surface and is a harmful air pollutant.

Scientific studies link ozone pollution to chronic asthma and bronchitis. Children are vulnerable because they spend a lot of active time outdoors and their lungs are still developing. Ozone should also be a concern for otherwise healthy individuals who are active out-

doors in the summer. Current ozone levels are available 24-hrs a day, online at www.scapca.org, or by calling the Air Quality Index at 477-4710.

Summer poses a specific concern for ground-level ozone. It is formed when emissions from various activities—refueling and driving cars, the use of industrial and household chemicals and solvents, gas-powered lawn equipment, etc.—"bake" in the hot, summer sun. Ozone levels are highest on clear, calm days when temperatures reach into the 90s and beyond.

See back page for tips to reduce ozone pollution.



Mow Down Air Pollution This Summer!

Black & Decker has teamed up with **SCAPCA** to **Mow Down Air Pollution**. The promotion encourages the use of electric or manual-powered yard and garden equipment, instead of gas-powered equipment. Electric or manual-powered tools do the job, but without the harmful emissions and added costs of operation, maintenance and repairs.

Spokane County residents may enter-to-win an electric yard and garden tool, donated by Black & Decker and local retailers. **There are four ways to enter:**

1. Online at www.scapca.org, click on the contest link in the news article.
2. At SCAPCA, 1101 W. College Ave. Suite 403, during office hours: Mon-Fri, 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

3. Stop by SCAPCA's "Clean Air" booth at the Spokane Indians Base ball game on Monday, August 15.
4. Enter-to-win at any of these local participating retailers:

ACE Hardware Stores:

4904 N. Harvard
9110 E. Montgomery
2424 N. Division
4416 S. Regal
15405 E. Sprague

River Ridge Hardware:

2803 W. Garland Ave.

Spokane Power Tool & Hardware

801 E. Trent.

The **Mow Down Air Pollution** giveaway ends August 31. Winners will be drawn September 7, 2005.

Sale of mercury-containing products to be phased-out

Effective January 1, 2006, it will be illegal to sell or distribute thermometers, manometers (pressure-measuring instruments, such as blood-pressure gauges) and novelty items such as toys, games or jewelry containing mercury.

Sales of thermostats containing mercury are also banned, unless the manufacturer participates in a thermostat recycling program.

Mercury-free alternatives are already on store shelves, but products containing mercury are still being sold.

Mercury is a silver-colored liquid metal that can conduct electricity as well as measure temperature and pressure. As a result, mercury has been used in many household and commercial products. The problem is, in addition to these unique properties, mercury is also highly toxic.

Mercury is a neurotoxin that can damage the developing brain and may lead to learning disabilities in children. Mercury may also adversely affect the kidneys, lungs, and cardiovascular system. If exposed to the air at room temperature, mercury can vaporize and be inhaled, making indoor spills extremely dangerous.

When mercury spills outdoors, it often ends up in lakes, streams and the ocean, where bacteria convert it into methylmercury. It is then ingested by animals, accumulating as it moves up the food chain. Eating mercury-contaminated fish is the primary way people are exposed to mercury.

To learn more about the Mercury Education and Reduction Act, contact Miles Kuntz, Ecology, 360-407-6748 or miku461@ecy.wa.gov.

◆ AIR QUALITY CALENDAR ◆

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.

Please contact Lisa Woodard, *Editor*, with comments, suggestions or story ideas:
 Phone: 477-4727, ext. # 115
 Fax: 477-6828
 Email: publicinfo@scapca.org

Information Numbers:

SCAPCA:
 (509) 477-4727

Burning Information:
 (509) 477-4710

Air Quality Index:
 (509) 477-2571



SCAPCA
 1101 W. College Ave., Suite 403
 Spokane, WA 99201
 Email address: scapca@scapca.org
 Web: www.scapca.org

2005 Board of Directors:

Matthew Pederson, Small Cities and Towns Representative, Chair
 Michele Pope, Member-at-Large, Vice-Chair
 Mike Brewer, City of Spokane Representative
 Phil Harris, Spokane County Commissioner
 Todd Mielke, Spokane County Commissioner

If you wish to be removed from this mailing list, call 477-4727, ext. # 100. This newsletter is available to download at www.scapca.org.

- Aug. 4: SCAPCA's monthly board meeting cancelled.
- Aug:13: Kids Day at Riverfront Park, 11 a.m. - 4p.m. Visit the SCAPCA booth, co-sponsored by the American Lung Association of Washington, for kids activities and air quality information.
- Aug. 18: Special SCAPCA Board Meeting. The Chair of the SCAPCA Board has called for a special meeting of the board to provide opportunity for Inland Asphalt and Northwest Renovators to register their complaints regarding permitting decisions made by SCAPCA staff. The meeting will take place at 9 a.m., in Room 301 of the Spokane Regional Health Building, W. 1101 College Ave.
- Sept. 1: SCAPCA monthly Board of Directors meeting, 9 a.m., Spokane County Public Works Building, W. 1026 Broadway, Lower Level Commissioners Hearing Room. For agenda, visit www.scapca.org, or call 477-4727.

Summer's Hot Temps = Ground-Level Ozone



There are individual actions we can all take to reduce ozone-forming pollutants, including:

- ✓ Refuel your car in the evening. This keeps smog-forming vapors out of the air during the heat of the day.
- ✓ Delay the use of gas-powered equipment until the cooler evening hours. Consider switching to electric or manual powered lawn & garden equipment.
- ✓ Reduce car trips by sharing rides, combining errands, riding the bus, etc.
- ✓ Avoid purchasing solvent-based household products, such as paints. Where possible, use a latex-based paint instead.
- ✓ Don't use lighter fluid to start your charcoal barbecue briquettes. Instead, use an electric probe to start the charcoal, or switch to gas or propane.
- ✓ More tips are available by visiting www.scapca.org.

Pre-sort STD
 U.S. Postage
PAID
 Spokane, WA
 Permit No. 7