

# ON THE AIR

Winter  
2017-18

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

## Eastern Washington University earns the 2018 Clean Air Award

**E**astern Washington University (EWU) is the 2018 Clean Air Award recipient, recognized for their innovation, leadership and commitment to reducing air emissions. The annual award, in its 15th year, is presented by Spokane Clean Air to publicly recognize outstanding efforts and to encourage others to follow suit.

EWU is home to more than 13,500 students and 1,900 staff. The campus has 58 buildings and covers approximately 155 acres. They have their own heating plant and fueling facilities for their service fleet. Most services required by the University are handled by University shops.

Most of the campus buildings have propane-powered back-up generators supplying emergency power. There is one diesel powered back-up generator

for the Rozell Heating Plant. Propane is preferred over diesel because it's cleaner and no risk to contaminate soil or water due to spills.



The generators are set to start automatically when an interruption is detected to the buildings power and shut down automatically when power is restored. All generators are tracked by hour and fuel use to determine emissions.

EWU's boilers are kept running at a high efficiency. Year-round maintenance efforts reduces stack and heat

loss, improves heat transfer and recovers waste heat.

In the past, EWU used solvent stills, which generated volatile organic compounds. With chemical substitution and thrifty management, their use of the stills was minimized and eventually eliminated.

## Air pollution measuring streetlights

**Y**ou likely don't notice them – but attached to three streetlights in and around the University District are small air quality sensors. In the coming months, the number of air monitors will increase to nine. The data collected from the current locations is fed to a local collaboration called Urbanova and a project called The Smart and Connected Streetlights Pilot.

Washington State University's Laboratory for Atmospheric Research is among this collaboration and pilot project. They use the data to look at pollution trends and variations. By narrowing in on the 770 acres of the University District, researchers are hoping to gain more understanding about how pollution can vary on a smaller scale.

For example, how can air quality differ from one street to the next? Or why is there a small increase in pollution levels at a certain time? And, perhaps most importantly, what causes the variation and what does that mean to the city?

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## Streetlight air sensors

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“The Smart and Connected Streetlights Pilot will help increase energy efficiency and public safety while also assessing the role of air quality in healthy cities,” according to Urbanova.

Similarly, Spokane Clean Air also uses a network of air quality monitors. The scope, however, is much greater. Spokane Clean Air’s data is used to provide daily air quality forecasts, to notify the community when air quality is approaching unhealthful levels, and to identify potential pollution problems and solutions in all of Spokane County.

Data collected by Spokane Clean Air is also used to ensure our area meets national, ambient air quality standards that are set by the U.S. EPA.

“While the air pollution sensors used in the Urbanova project are not as accurate as ours and cannot be used to measure compliance with federal air quality standards, they are much smaller and can be deployed at a wider variety of locations,” said Mark Rowe, Air Monitoring Section Manager at Spokane Clean Air.

Urbanova is still in the beginning stages of collecting air quality data, however, the ultimate goal is to create technological solutions to improve services and infrastructure for citizens and also address urban challenges. Once refined, these solutions can be replicated around the world.

By fine tuning these small, inexpensive air monitoring sensors, Urbanova has the potential to help cities create a more robust infrastructure and plan for population growth. When planning for growing cities, cost is often a large determining factor.

“The monitors used by Urbanova cost only a small fraction of the amount that Spokane Clean Air’s do and can therefore be used in larger quantities,” said Rowe. “That allows the Urbanova project to determine the spatial variability of air pollutants on a smaller scale than our monitoring network.”

The Urbanova partners include Avista, the City of Spokane, Itron, McKinstry, the University District and WSU. ■

## Spokane Waste Directory

**D**o you know what items are safe for the recycling bin and what should go in the trash bin? Or perhaps what items need an entirely different means of disposal? The Spokane Waste Directory has got you covered.

Set up for residential and business use, the directly helps you find out how to properly dispose of 150 different waste types.

“Our goal is to make it easy for residents and business owners to do the right thing with their waste,” said Tonilee Hanson with Spokane River Forum. “This helps protect our water, land and air quality.”

The site allows you to select your type of waste and directs you to the correct method of disposal. For example, if you are looking to get rid of used books, a host of options are listed as available—from second hand bookstores to county libraries to thrift stores.

More specialized options, like fertilizer, gel batteries and helium tanks, are also available. Simply find your specific waste on the list and the directory will connect you to the best way to dispose of the item.

To learn more, please visit: [www.spokanewastedirectory.org](http://www.spokanewastedirectory.org). ■

## Air Sensor Monitoring, Analysis tool

**A**dvances in air sensor technology are empowering communities and individuals to learn more about local air quality where they live, work and play.

New air sensor technology can be used to identify and assess air quality concerns from citizens and take action to reduce their exposure. Many of these new sensors are becoming available to the public so communities themselves can be proactive and get involved in community science activities.

In general, the science on air pollution and health doesn’t tell us what a few minutes of exposure to an elevated level of pollution will mean for you. But thousands of scientific studies do tell us about the health effects of longer exposures – such as eight hours for ozone, or 24 hours for particle pollution.

The lower-cost and portable technology is supporting the citizen science movement, which promotes public participation in research endeavors to better understand the potential impacts of environmental pollutants to public health.

EPA is conducting research to meet the growing demand for local air quality data to better understand the relationship between air pollution, exposure and human health. For more information, visit [www.epa.gov/air-sensor-toolbox](http://www.epa.gov/air-sensor-toolbox). ■

*From EPA’s air sensor website*

## No-Idle Zone...at schools near you!

**A**ir pollution is harmful for everyone. Children, however, are even more susceptible to its effects. That's why Spokane Clean Air works with local schools to coordinate the No-Idle Zone Program.

The No-Idle Zone Program asks drivers to turn off their engine when waiting to pick-up or drop-off their student at school. This helps keep car exhaust out of the air and out of students' developing lungs.

Spokane Clean Air assists in all aspects of the program. This includes:

- ✓ A personalized program outline and implementation suggestion
- ✓ Two, street-grade signs to post at pick-up and drop-off areas
- ✓ A letter to families with a fact sheet and optional pledge form
- ✓ No-Idle Zone branded litter bags

In the fall 2017, we were happy to have three new schools take the challenge to become a No-Idle Zone. Please join us in welcoming our newest No-Idle Zone schools: Adams

Elementary, Trentwood Elementary and Spokane Public Montessori.

### Spotlight on Trentwood

When deciding whether or not the No-Idle Zone Program is right for your school, consider having students take an active role in the program. That's exactly what Trentwood Elementary did.

After the students listened to a presentation about the program, they voted on whether or not to create a No-Idle Zone at their school.

After a resounding "yes", the program was in the students' hands.

"Trentwood's ASB decided that creating a No-Idle Zone was important because with the large number of families dropping-off and picking-up students, we were responsible for depositing toxic gas into the air," Stephanie Koch, teacher at Trentwood Elementary, explained. "They wanted to do something about it."



Trentwood ASB students, Bentley, Jady and Gavin, help build excitement for the No-Idle Zone Program while presenting to students, staff and parents.

The ASB took the lead and presented the program to teachers and to individual classrooms.

Once the program was officially in place, everyone in the school knew what to expect and idling was drastically reduced. So far, approximately 160 student families and staff members have signed and returned the pledge to be idle-free.

The No-Idle Zone Program is available throughout Spokane County. Contact Stephanie at [SMay@spokanecleanair.org](mailto:SMay@spokanecleanair.org) or 509-477-4727, ext 125 for additional information. ■

## EWU Earns 2018 Clean Air Award...continued from cover page

EWU's commitment to environmental stewardship can be found throughout campus.

Their Chemistry Department uses available alternatives to toxic chemicals and the smallest quantities possible of chemicals. This has significantly reduced hazardous waste and off gassing of dangerous chemicals.

Their Grounds Department mulch most of their grass clippings and leaves. The soil is tested to see what nutrients, if any are needed. They fertilize only when needed with fertilizer made with no or very little phosphorus. The department has also been

using more sustainable native plants in new or renovated buildings that are more drought-tolerant, pest resistant and require less maintenance.

Eastern's Roos Field sports an artificial red turf, fondly known as "The Inferno," which eliminates the need for fertilizers, herbicides or pesticides.

EWU's Custodial Department shifted from toxic volatile chemicals to environmentally friendly products to avoid employee exposures to dangerous chemicals and decrease chemical disposal.

EWU has a robust commute trip reduction program for employees and students. Their program consists of preferred rideshare parking, subsidized vanpool and transit, secured bicycle parking, showers and lockers, Guaranteed Ride Home program and employee recognition and incentives. In 2017, the program was responsible for saving over 1.2 million vehicles from being driven on our roadways. This is a reduction of nearly six tons of carbon monoxide pollution.

Congratulations EWU! Your efforts are making a difference. GO EAGS! ■

# Calling all Spokane County artists in grades K-6!

Create a poster  
using the theme:

## Be air aware!

Submissions due **Friday, April 13, 2018.**

Posters will be displayed throughout Spokane County.  
Prizes will be awarded to finalists.

2nd Annual  
**Clean Air Month**  
Poster  
Contest

All participants will receive  
a coupon for one **FREE** slice  
of Pizza Pipeline pizza!

To learn more, please visit:  
[SpokaneCleanAir.org](http://SpokaneCleanAir.org)

*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. Contact Lisa Woodard, *Editor*, with comments or story ideas:  
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