



# Treasure the Valley's Air

## A year of activities since the Governor's Conference on Air Quality in the Treasure Valley

### Message from the Governor



We've made tremendous progress in clearing the Valley's air. I congratulate all the communities, individuals, and businesses in the area for making air quality a priority.

I'd like to highlight a couple of our most recent successes.

The Treasure Valley is now home to a new E85 ethanol fuel pump, allowing alternative fuel vehicles to fill up to help Treasure the Valley's Air. To take advantage of this opportunity, I will soon be driving an E85-compatible Chevrolet Suburban, which will cut emissions and help promote alternative fuels.

My office has instituted a carpooling and telecommuting plan in the event of air quality alerts in the Valley this winter to reduce the number of cars on the road. State agencies are working to adopt similar plans.

We also recently celebrated the new Stevens Springs subdivision in Star, which will be the first in the Pacific Northwest to have 100 percent Energy Star-compliant homes. This partnership between Idaho Power, the Idaho Energy Division, and homebuilders will reduce the demand for energy from coal-fired power plants.

Again, congratulations on all your efforts and the partnerships that have been developed as we all Treasure the Valley's Air!

### Governor Kempthorne Asks State Agencies to Lead by Example

In November, Governor Dirk Kempthorne issued an executive order directing state agencies to take the lead in protecting air quality. Under the order, agencies are urged to protect air quality by such actions as purchasing low emissions vehicles, using alternative fuels, and encouraging alternative transportation.

Here's what some agencies are doing:

- √ Idaho State Department of Agriculture monitors air quality conditions daily and alerts staff if poor conditions are expected. Staff are encouraged to reduce travel during poor conditions by carpooling, biking, or taking the bus.
- √ Idaho Department of Administration has developed state purchasing contracts for low-emission hybrid vehicles.
- √ Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) has reduced volatile organic compound (VOC) emissions, which form ground level ozone and fine particulate matter. ITD switched to low-VOC pavement marking and bridge paints, reduced VOC solvents in testing labs, and follows best management practices in its printshop.

### Mayors Participate in Public Service Announcement

Seven Treasure Valley mayors played a starring role in the first *Treasure the Valley's Air* public service announcement (PSA). The PSA, aired on television in June and July, introduced the public to the *Treasure the Valley's Air* program in a lighthearted and upbeat 30-second spot that also promoted vanpooling. Participants were Boise Mayor David Bieter, Nampa Mayor Tom Dale, Meridian Mayor Tammy de Weerd, Parma Mayor Bob Flowers, Eagle Mayor Nancy Merrill, Caldwell Mayor Garret Nancolas, and Kuna Mayor Dean Obray. More PSAs will air on such topics as alternative fuels, anti-idle programs, and air pollution episodes. Stay tuned!

### **Treasure the Valley's Air**

*Treasure the Valley's Air* is a coalition of local partners working together to implement community-based projects to improve and protect air quality in the Treasure Valley. Partnerships are voluntary and dynamic, and can include any mix of businesses, government agencies, organizations, and individuals. Under the *Treasure the Valley's Air* concept, partners join together to share expertise and leverage resources to design, carry out, and promote air quality improvement projects. *Treasure the Valley's Air* has resulted in several air quality projects including *Clean Air Zone Idaho* (page 2) and the *Ozone Saturation Study* (page 4).

For more information, contact Leonard Herr at DEQ: (208) 373-0550.

**Visit the new *Treasure the Valley's Air* web site:**

[www.air.idaho.gov](http://www.air.idaho.gov)

## Commuteride Gets New Vans!



In October, the Ada County Highway District (ACHD) Commuteride Program unveiled 21 new vans for its vanpool fleet. Six of the new vans replaced vans on existing routes, while 15 vans have been placed on new routes. Each van removes 10 to 12 cars from the road during peak commuting times. The addition of the new vans is projected to save more than three million vehicle miles of travel in the first year of operation.

## May in Motion Shows Impressive Results

This spring the ACHD Commuteride Program hosted the May in Motion Alternative Transportation Challenge to encourage Treasure Valley commuters to give up their single-occupancy vehicles in favor of riding the bus, biking, carpooling, vanpooling, or walking. A total of 1,450 participants from 44 companies and government agencies participated, avoiding more than 28,000 single-car commutes.

Companies of all sizes competed. Following are the winners:

- ★ Fewer than 25 employees: Idaho Conservation League
- ★ 26-50 employees: Idaho Division of Human Resources
- ★ 51-100 employees: REI
- ★ 101-500 employees: Idaho Department of Environmental Quality
- ★ 501+ employees: Idaho Transportation Department
- ★ Highest number of participating employees from one company: Micron Technology



Boise Mayor David Bieter speaks at the May in Motion awards ceremony.

## Boise State University Protects Air Quality

As home to 2,000 staff and 18,000 students, Boise State University has taken the lead in protecting air quality. Boise State is looking at all campus operations and departments for opportunities to improve air quality. Examples of actions include:

- √ Providing bus passes to students, faculty, and staff.
- √ Alerting faculty and staff when air quality is poor.
- √ Reducing VOC emissions from the print shop by switching to low VOC chemicals.
- √ Eliminating solvent-based inks and acids from the Art Print Making Department.

In addition, the Facilities Department at Boise State has instituted many actions to reduce emissions from vehicles, the number one source of air pollution in the Treasure Valley. Since 1992, the university has made an effort to eliminate older, inefficient vehicles replacing them with more fuel-efficient vehicles including several alternatively fueled cars and one hybrid. The department has replaced gas powered lawn and maintenance equipment with electric models. Boise State has issued electric golf carts to Parking Services, the Varsity Center, and Athletics for on-campus travel.

## No Idle Zones Reduce Effects of Harmful Exhaust

A new statewide program, aimed at reducing children's exposure to school bus diesel exhaust, discourages idling of buses and other vehicles near school loading areas, and encourages alternative fuels in school buses. *Clean Air Zone Idaho* was initiated by the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality to:

- ◆ Provide a healthier environment for Idaho's school children by reducing emissions from diesel-powered school buses.
- ◆ Improve air quality in and around school buildings and throughout local communities.
- ◆ Assist school districts in obtaining funding to purchase cleaner fuels, replace existing buses with cleaner models, and/or retrofit buses with advanced emission control technologies.

Timberline High School helped kick off *Clean Air Zone Idaho* in a spring pilot project. *Clean Air Zone Idaho* expanded statewide in the fall. Participating schools receive a tool kit of resources to help implement the program and signs to designate no idle zones.

To join, contact Patti Best at DEQ: (208) 373-0146.



# Alternative Fuel News

## Treasure Valley Clean Cities Coalition

Clean Cities is a U.S. Department of Energy program designed to advance the nation's economic, environmental, and energy security by supporting local decisions to adopt practices that contribute to the reduction of petroleum consumption. Clean Cities carries out this mission through a network of more than 80 volunteer coalitions across the U.S., that develop public/private partnerships to promote alternative fuels and vehicles, fuel blends, fuel economy, hybrid vehicles, and idle reduction.

To improve air quality in the Treasure Valley, a coalition has formed to encourage alternative fuel use, develop alternative fuel infrastructure, and work toward attaining a Clean Cities designation for the area. The Treasure Valley Clean Cities Coalition is comprised of local stakeholders who have agreed to do their part to reduce the use of petroleum.

Stakeholders include state and federal agencies, utilities, military installations, private businesses, universities, schools, and not-for-profit organizations.

To join, contact Beth Baird at the City of Boise: (208) 384-3984.

## Alternative Energy Festival Held in Boise



On the weekend of August 6, the Discovery Center of Idaho hosted the first Treasure Valley Alternative Energy Festival. The Discovery Center worked with the Idaho Departments of Water Resources and Environmental Quality, City of Boise, ValleyRide, Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho (COMPASS), INEEL, Idaho Power, Boise State University, the University of Idaho, and others to carry out this high-energy event.

Displays presented information on hydrogen, biodiesel, and ethanol, emphasizing the role of alternative fuels as part of a comprehensive strategy to protect Idaho's air quality.

## Over 100,000 Gallons of B20 Sold in the Treasure Valley

From January to July 2004, more than 127,100 gallons of B20 biodiesel were sold in the Treasure Valley. B20 is a blend of 80% petroleum diesel fuel and 20% biofuel made from soy, beans, rape seeds, mustard seed, or other agricultural crops. Over three-quarters were sold to the public, with the remaining sold to partners in the Idaho B20 program.

The Idaho B20 program is made possible by grants from the U.S. Department of

Energy and COMPASS. The goal of the program is to provide a public demonstration of the use of B20 for both diesel fleet and individual diesel vehicle users, leading to the development of a B20 consumer market in Idaho.

For more information, visit the Idaho Department of Water Resource's B20 Biodiesel Web site at [www.idahobiofuel.org/](http://www.idahobiofuel.org/).

## Ethanol Fuel Pump Opens in Boise

On November 5, 2004, Governor Dirk Kempthorne unveiled a new E85 ethanol fueling pump in downtown Boise. E85, a blend of 85% ethanol and 15% gasoline, is an alternative fuel produced by fermenting plants such as corn and potatoes. Vehicles fueled by E85 produce less air toxics, carbon monoxide, and greenhouse gases. Flexible fueled vehicles, designed to run on either E85 or gasoline, are produced by GM, Ford, DaimlerChrysler, Mazda, Mercury, and Isuzu.

For more information on E85 vehicles, visit the National Ethanol Vehicle Coalition's web site at [www.E85fuel.com](http://www.E85fuel.com). The pump is located at the Stinker Station, 2323 W. Main St., in Boise.

## Agencies Partner to Reduce VOCs

When painting a car, paint overspray and solvent-based paints emit volatile organic compounds (VOCs), emissions that contribute to the formation of ozone and fine particulate matter. In June, the Idaho Division of Professional Technical Education and Idaho Department of Environmental Quality partnered to train auto body class instructors from across the state in pollution prevention practices designed to reduce VOC emissions. The training provided information on current technology and gave participants an opportunity to practice recommended methods in a spray booth setting.

It is estimated that operators who implement process-related pollution prevention and practice good painting techniques can improve their transfer efficiency by 25%. Other benefits include reducing VOC emissions by an average of 156 pounds/year and savings of up to \$4,200/year through less material use and lower disposal fees. By bringing this training to Idaho's auto body instructors, the agencies hope to pass the knowledge and savings to the next generation of auto-body paint specialists.

## Citizens and DEQ Join Forces in Ozone Saturation Study

DEQ and a dozen local residents partnered this summer to study ozone concentrations throughout the Treasure Valley. Ozone is a gas formed when nitrogen oxides (NO<sub>x</sub>) and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) combine in the presence of heat and sunlight. When formed at ground level, ozone is an air pollutant that can adversely affect public health, particularly among people with respiratory conditions. The Treasure Valley is a prime setting for formation of ozone during the hot, sunny days of summer.

Under this project, volunteer residents throughout the valley were provided with ozone sampling devices. Residents placed the equipment in yards and collected samples twice a week during July and August.



Courtney Edmondson of Caldwell attaches an ozone monitoring cartridge to the holder.

Courtney places the ozone cartridge back in the package, after a 24-hour reading, to send to the lab for analysis.



DEQ tracks ozone pollution using three permanent monitors situated in the Treasure Valley. To meet federal requirements, monitors must be sited to accurately reflect highest exposures to the general population. Data collected by the community volunteers will be used to test the siting of the locations of the existing ozone monitors and improve air quality sampling throughout the valley.

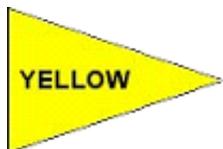
To learn more, contact Mike Toole at DEQ: (208) 373-0104.

## DEQ Implements Air Quality Alert Plan

DEQ has developed an air quality forecast system. During periods of degraded air quality, the public is notified of the air quality alert condition by the following symbols:



An air quality alert condition of *green* means that air quality will be good for the following day and no public action is required.



A *yellow* air quality alert is declared when the Air Quality Index (AQI) category of “moderate” has been forecasted for the following day. This means that air quality is deteriorating and increasing pollution levels may impact the health of sensitive populations such as children, the elderly, and people with breathing and heart conditions. Certain voluntary efforts to control air pollution are encouraged.



An air quality advisory condition of *red* is declared when the AQI category of “moderate” or higher has been forecasted *and* weather conditions are expected to cause pollution levels to increase. During this stage, sensitive populations are encouraged to avoid outdoor exposure, and local businesses are urged to help minimize pollution by actions such as allowing alternative work schedules.

This air quality forecast system will help all citizens of the Treasure Valley react to the threat of poor air quality and take appropriate action to prevent air pollution episodes.

To view current forecasts visit [www.deq.idaho.gov/air/aqindex.cfm](http://www.deq.idaho.gov/air/aqindex.cfm)

## Inversion Season Begins November 1

Due to topography, weather patterns, and rapid growth, the Treasure Valley is subject to some of the most severe wintertime inversions in the Intermountain West. During an inversion, colder, heavier air settles into the valley while the air above the inversion is much warmer. This causes air stagnation, and the cold air and accumulating air pollution are trapped. Pollution can build until emission sources are controlled and/or a strong weather system breaks the inversion. During these events, monitors in the valley have recorded levels above the national health-based standard for fine particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>).

Treasure Valley businesses and residents are asked to do their part to help protect air quality and public health during an inversion. Here are some ways to help:

- ☛ **Keep track of air quality forecasts.** Local news stations throughout the valley report when conditions are likely to be poor. Information is also posted to DEQ’s Web site at [www.deq.idaho.gov/air/aqindex.cfm](http://www.deq.idaho.gov/air/aqindex.cfm).
- ☛ **Limit driving.** Carpool, take the bus, combine or postpone trips until conditions improve.
- ☛ **Get a tune up.** This is a good time to make sure your car is running at maximum efficiency.

For more tips, visit DEQ’s Web site at [www.deq.idaho.gov/air/prog\\_issues.htm](http://www.deq.idaho.gov/air/prog_issues.htm)