



NEWS

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Tri-Valley Bus Ridership up 17%

Public Responds to *Spare the Air* Advisories

The first three *Spare the Air* advisories of 2003 were issued last week on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, June 25th to June 27th. *Spare the Air* days are declared by the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (Air District) when air quality is approaching the federal health standard for ground level ozone. The most significant response to the *Spare the Air* advisories included:

- Increased ridership on the *Wheels* bus system in the Tri-Valley area of 15 percent, 17 percent and 16.8 percent, respectively on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. Free transit on *Wheels* on *Spare the Air* days is a pilot program jointly funded by the Air District and the Livermore Amador Valley Transit Authority.
- There were no excesses of the federal one-hour ozone standard at any of the Air District's 26 monitoring sites. There were, however, excesses of the federal eight-hour ozone standard in Livermore, Gilroy, Los Gatos, San Martin and Sunnyvale.
- Over 2100 Bay Area employers notified their employees of the *Spare the Air* requests, reaching over one million employees in the workplace. *Spare the Air Employers* pledge to educate their workforce about air quality and notify them when an advisory is issued.
- The Bay Area's refineries also curtailed emissions by postponing painting, herbicide spraying and use of gasoline maintenance equipment during the three day episode in response to a request from the Air District's Executive Officer William Norton. In addition, an onsite gasoline dispensing facility was closed until 5 PM and a tank cleaning that was in progress was halted.
- Phone surveys were conducted on three evenings to ascertain the public's response to the *Spare the Air* advisory. Results are pending.

"We are grateful for the help that Bay Area residents and employers gave us in reducing activities that pollute on some of our most polluted days," said William Norton. "Every little bit counts and minimizes the impact of air pollution on health," he said.

(more)

Mr. Norton went on to urge all Bay Area residents with email access to sign up for advance notification of *Spare the Air* days at www.sparetheair.org. "The ability to plan ahead makes it easier for individuals to do their part in reducing pollution," he said.

The Air District has a goal of convincing 10 percent of the Bay Area's population to actively participate in pollution prevention on *Spare the Air* days. Random telephone surveys conducted in 2002 found that almost 4 percent of the public drove less in response to *Spare the Air* advisories, and an additional 4 percent curtailed the use of consumer products and gasoline-powered lawn mowers, netting emission reductions of approximately 4 tons per episode.

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