



NEWS

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***Spare the Air Tonight* Season Ends Season Closes Monday, February 11, 2008**

SAN FRANCISCO - Today the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (Air District) announced the close of the wintertime 2007/2008 *Spare the Air Tonight* campaign. This season, the Air District issued six *Spare the Air Tonight* advisories on nights when air quality was forecast to reach unhealthy levels. This number of advisories is lower than the 30 advisories issued last season in winter 2006/2007. Although favorable meteorological conditions, such as increased rain and wind, played a role in improving air quality, public participation in reducing wood burning may also have been an important factor. Residential wood burning is a significant source of wintertime air pollution and is responsible for approximately one-third of fine particle pollution in winter months.

"The primary goal of our wintertime program is to protect the public from the harmful effects of small particle pollution," said Air District Executive Officer Jack P. Broadbent. "Exposure to small particles like wood smoke and soot can be unhealthy for your eyes, lungs and heart. "

The Air District has been working to implement a regional strategy to reduce small particle pollution in the Bay Area. Along with the *Spare the Air Tonight* program, this strategy has included adopting new regulations to reduce particulate pollution from refineries, restaurants, and other businesses, as well as developing a rule to reduce wood smoke from residences.

In September 2006, based on scientific-health studies, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency revised the standard for fine particulate matter (or PM 2.5) by substantially lowering the previous threshold. Scientific evidence shows that both short and long-term exposure to fine particle pollution is associated with a multitude of health problems, especially for the very young, the elderly and people with respiratory or cardiovascular disease.

This winter, the Air District's *Spare the Air Tonight* season began November 13, 2007. The campaign aims to alert the public about wintertime air pollution and to help the Bay Area meet air quality standards.

For more information call 1-800 HELP AIR or visit www.sparetheair.org.

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