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ADEQ Issues Second High Pollution Advisory of Season for Particulate Matter for Tuesday, Dec. 30

PHOENIX (Dec. 29, 2008) - The Arizona Department of Environmental Quality has issued a High Pollution Advisory (HPA) for Tuesday, Dec. 30 for the Phoenix metropolitan area because of forecast weather conditions that are expected to be conducive for unhealthy levels of fine Particulate Matter 2.5 microns and smaller (PM_{2.5}), primarily smoke and soot generated by burning wood in indoor and outdoor fireplaces and emissions from motor vehicles.

The HPA is being issued because of anticipated colder weather conditions that will worsen the temperature inversion and an expected stagnant air mass, both of which will result in elevated levels of smoke and soot pollution in the Valley. This is the second HPA for particulate matter pollution ADEQ has issued this winter season. The first HPA for this winter was issued for this past Sunday, Dec. 28.

Because the largest sources of the projected pollution are wood burning and vehicle emissions, Valley residents are urged not to use their wood-burning fireplaces or stoves or do any outside burning, as well as reduce vehicle use to the greatest extent possible. ADEQ also advises residents to take steps to reduce their exposure to the pollution, especially children, seniors and people with asthma and other respiratory problems.

The highest concentrations of PM_{2.5} recorded during winter months in the past several years have been dominated by wood smoke, based on measurements made by ADEQ's air quality monitoring equipment. If Valley residents refrain from or reduce wood-burning activities, it can help prevent a violation of the health standard for PM_{2.5}.

ADEQ recommends that children and adults with respiratory problems avoid outdoor activities on Tuesday and suggests that the general public limit outdoor activity throughout the day. Employers participating in the Valley's Trip Reduction Program should implement their pollution reduction action plans and all Valley residents should reduce particulate matter-producing emissions by taking the following steps:

- Eliminate fireplace and wood stove use.
- Car pool, use mass transit, telecommute and/or reduce driving.
- Avoid using gas-powered lawn and garden equipment.
- Avoid activities that generate dust, such as driving on dirt roads.
- Stabilize loose soils.

HPA

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PM2.5 refers to particles that are 2.5 micrometers in diameter or smaller. Once inhaled, these particles can affect the heart and lungs and cause health effects, including irritation of the airways, coughing, difficulty breathing, decreased lung function, asthma, development of chronic bronchitis, irregular heartbeat, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease.

Daily air quality forecasts are on ADEQ's Web site at www.azdeq.gov/environ/air/ozone/ensemble.pdf or by calling (602) 771-2367. Those interested in receiving the air quality forecast via email can subscribe to our forecast list at www.azdeq.gov/subscribe.html.