



Maricopa County
Air Quality Department



September 29, 2010

Ozone season ends with a health watch forecast

(Maricopa County, AZ) A health watch for ground level ozone permeates the airwaves on the final day of summer ozone season. The official end date of our Valley's "ozone season" is September 30th, but with our unseasonably warm temperatures, we could see the pollutant hanging around with the triple digit temperatures.

"Our long, hot summer underscores the need for year-round action to prevent smog and protect health with increased awareness, improved tools, and broader partnerships," said Arizona Department of Environmental Quality Director Benjamin H. Grumbles.

Summer ozone season begins in April and ends on the last day of September. This year, our region experienced 32 health watches and five high pollution advisories [HPA] for ozone pollution. In 2009 we saw 31 health watches and six HPAs. This past summer, ozone pollution actually exceeded the federal health standard nine days.

"Each time we experience high levels of pollution at the monitoring stations means we are negatively impacting our health," states Air Quality Department Director Bill Wiley. "Poor air quality affects everyone in the Valley. Maintaining our air quality will take the effort of every individual to take action and incorporate pollution prevention into your every day routine."

Ground level ozone is formed by a chemical reaction that needs heat from sunlight, nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compounds [VOCs] to form. Our air quality in the Valley is monitored daily by the Maricopa County Air Quality Department and Arizona Department of Environmental Quality. If air pollution levels begin to approach the federal health standard, air quality forecasters issue a health watch or high pollution advisory as a preventative measure.

"Taking responsibility for cleaner air in the Valley means taking action," said David Boggs, Valley Metro executive director. "Do your part by combining trips, carpooling, riding transit, or taking your work home to completely avoid commute trips."

OZONE BACKGROUND: Ground level ozone is formed by a chemical reaction that needs heat from sunlight, nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compounds [VOCs] to form. The months of April through September make up our Valley's longer-than-normal "ozone season."

(continued on next page)

WHO'S WHO?

The **Arizona Department of Environmental Quality [ADEQ]** provides a daily forecast for air quality. When conditions exist, ADEQ will issue high pollution advisories or health watches. 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 ADEQ's forecast list at www.azdeq.gov/subscribe.html and text alerts at www.azdeq.gov/sms.html

The **Maricopa County Air Quality Department** provides air quality education and outreach for the residents and visitors of Maricopa County. Visit www.CleanAirMakeMore.com to learn more. Once on the site, you may sign up to receive an e-mail or text message on a bad air day. Once you are aware of the air quality forecast, you can take action to help us fight pollution.

The Maricopa County Air Quality Department is a regulatory agency whose goal is to ensure federal clean air standards are achieved and maintained for the residents and visitors of Maricopa County. The department is governed by the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors and follows air quality standards set forth by the federal Clean Air Act.

Valley Metro/RPTA provides eco-friendly public transit options to residents of greater Phoenix and Maricopa County, including a clean-fuel bus fleet, low-emissions light rail, online carpool matching and bus trip mapping, and bicycle and telework assistance. Funding is provided by local, state and federal revenues; and administered by a board of 15 governments working to improve and regionalize the public transit system. www.ValleyMetro.org

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