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ADEQ Announces That Full-Service Air Quality Forecasting for Levels of Dust Begins Today For Residents of Nogales

PHOENIX (Oct. 1, 2012) – Arizona Department of Environmental Quality officials announced that the agency’s second full-service air quality forecasting system outside Phoenix, including daily forecasts, begins today in Nogales. A similar forecasting system started in Yuma in February 2012.

Recording of data from an air quality monitor that measures levels of Particulate Matter-10, coarse dust, began this morning for a daily color-coded Air Quality Index which is online at www.azdeq.gov.

“This is a very important day for all of us at ADEQ being able to deliver this level of air quality forecasting service outside the Phoenix metropolitan area for only the second time,” ADEQ Director Henry Darwin said. “Our mission is to protect the public health and environment of Arizona and it’s important that we share more and more data with people throughout the state so they can use that information to help protect their health. It’s also important that those who generate dust be aware of weather conditions and take precautions to reduce it.”

The Nogales area has been listed in non-attainment for both PM-10 and PM-2.5 standards by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

“It’s our hope that tools like this daily air quality forecasting system coupled with continued monitoring will help correct that situation,” Director Darwin said during an afternoon press conference at Nogales City Hall.

During the past two years, ADEQ has had a seasonal Nogales and Vicinity Particle Pollution Risk Forecast that predicted wind speeds and the risk of dust caused by the winds for three days after issuance of the forecasts. That service ends with the implementation of this public health oriented air quality forecast.

Also at the press conference, it was announced that the Nogales Area Flag Program would begin with schools in the area flying different colored flags to demonstrate anticipated air quality conditions of the day.

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