



City of San Marcos

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NEWS

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For Immediate Release

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‘Big Push’ Seeks Citizen Help for Air Quality Improvement

The 2009 ozone season (April 1 – October 31) is a crucial time for air quality in the Austin metropolitan area and surrounding counties, including San Marcos and Hays County.

Ozone levels monitored during this time will determine whether the area will meet federal standards for ground-level ozone.

Regional air quality partners have initiated “The Big Push” to encourage citizens and businesses to help reduce ozone-forming emissions, especially during September, historically the worst month for ozone in Central Texas.

If ozone levels do not meet federal standards, the area will be designated as a “nonattainment area”, and state and local governments will be required to develop and implement control plans to reduce ozone-forming pollution. This could result in restrictions on business development and delays in transportation projects.

Based on readings so far, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) has recommended to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) that central Texas be designated as a nonattainment area. However, if ozone levels can be lowered for the remainder of the 2009 ozone season, the area could still meet federal standards and qualify for the attainment designation.

Here are a few things citizens can do to reduce ozone-forming emissions:

- Become educated on when ozone watches and warnings occur by signing up for free email alerts at www.cleanairforce.org.
- Carpool, ride the bus, telecommute, ride your bike or simply avoid peak driving times, especially on ozone action days.
- Delay running errands, refueling vehicles and mowing/landscaping until after 6:00 p.m.

- Don't top off your gas tank when refueling.
- Keep your vehicle properly tuned to reduce exhaust levels.
- Turn off your vehicle instead of letting it idle.
- Bring your lunch to work to reduce driving.
- Turn off lights when not in use, and use compact fluorescent light bulbs.
- Store paints, fuel and lighter fluid in sealed containers inside a garage or shed.
- Use more efficient equipment or alternative/additive fuels for less/cleaner emissions.

For more information on air quality and ground-level ozone please visit the EPA and TCEQ websites at epa.gov/air/ozonepollution/ and tceq.state.tx.us/nav/main/air_main.html, or contact the City of San Marcos at 512.393.8310.

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