



NEWS

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**For Immediate Release
Friday, October 22, 2004**

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Bay Area's Summer Smog Season Closes on a Clean Note

2004 cleanest year since start of air quality monitoring in 1960s

San Francisco, CA – Oct. 22, 2004 – The summertime 2004 smog season came to an official close last week, marking the end of what has been the cleanest year in the Bay Area since air quality monitoring began in the early 1960s. The Bay Area had no excesses of federal air quality standards for ground level ozone and only seven excesses of the more stringent state ozone standard.

"We want to thank the people of the Bay Area who helped make 2004 the cleanest air quality year in 40 years," said Alameda County Supervisor Scott Haggerty, and Chairperson of the Air District's Board of Directors. "Bay Area residents have consistently supported clean air laws that have reduced emissions and brought us healthier air to breathe. We must now continue to move forward to solidify our gains and further reduce pollution to meet the more stringent state ozone standards," Haggerty said.

The Bay Area experienced its worst air quality in 1969 when there were 65 days over federal ozone standards. Over the past 35 years, a combination of strict controls on industry and consumer products, coupled with increasingly stringent controls on motor vehicles has led to a steady reduction in air pollution.

In 2004 the public participated more broadly in programs aimed at reducing air pollution on *Spare the Air* days. This included:

- Increased ridership of 40,000 on BART on the *Spare the Air* days of September 7th and 8th in response to a partnership that offered free transit during the morning commute.
- Twelve percent of the population reduced driving, use of gasoline powered garden equipment and consumer products that pollute, up from 8% the previous year.
- 24,000 registrants in the *AirAlert* e-mail notification system, which gives 24 hour advance notice of *Spare the Air* days, up 50% from the previous year.
- 575 schools now receive *Spare the Air* notices through *AirAlert*, an 18% increase over last year. This service allows schools to protect the health of children on high pollution days.

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Bay Area Continues Clean Air Progress

- Ridership increased by 9% on the *Wheels* bus system in the Tri-Valley area. A partnership between the Air District and the Livermore Amador Valley Transit Authority this summer offered free transit on *Spare the Air* days.

In addition to the *Spare the Air* program, the Air District also has several on-going efforts to involve the public directly in air pollution reduction programs. This includes a vehicle buy-back program that offers owners of 1985 and older motor vehicles \$650 to voluntarily retire vehicles for demolition; a Smoking Vehicle program that takes reports from the public about vehicles with excessive tailpipe smoke by calling 1 800 EXHAUST and gasoline lawn mower buy-back programs. Additional information on these programs can be found by visiting the Air District's web site at www.baaqmd.gov or by calling the Public Information Office at (415) 749-4900.

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