



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: August 28, 2009

**Contact: Aeron Arlin Genet, 704-2616
SLO County Air Pollution Control District**

**Dr. Penny Borenstein, 781-5500
SLO County Public Health Department**

ADDITIONAL SMOKE IMPACTS SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY AIR QUALITY

SAN LUIS OBISPO, CALIFORNIA, – The San Luis Obispo (SLO) County Air Pollution Control District (APCD) and County Public Health Department are advising the public of the potential for additional smoke impacts from the Bryson Fire in southern Monterey County and the La Brea Fire in northern Santa Barbara County. Changing winds and fire conditions make it difficult to predict which areas of the county may be most affected. However, until the fires are put out, smoke will likely be intermittently present in our region.

If you smell smoke, County officials urge you to take precautions and use common sense to reduce harmful health effects by limiting outdoor activities. These precautions are especially important for children, the elderly and people with respiratory and heart conditions. If a cough, shortness of breath, wheezing, exhaustion, light-headedness or chest pain occurs, outdoor activity should be stopped and the affected person should seek medical attention. Residents are also cautioned to avoid stirring up particles during cleanup of soot and ash.

Fire emissions can also result in much higher ozone concentrations throughout the region. Ozone is formed when air pollution and fire emissions are under the influence of heat and sunlight. People with respiratory conditions are particularly susceptible to high ozone concentrations. Ozone is forecasted to be the highest in the afternoons and early evenings in eastern San Luis Obispo County. Residents in the eastern portion of the county can reduce health impacts from high ozone by limiting outdoor activities and staying indoors.

County officials will continue to closely monitor smoke impacts and air pollution levels throughout our region. The public can also monitor real-time air quality throughout the county by following the air quality index (AQI). The AQI focuses on health effects individuals may experience within a few hours or days after breathing polluted air. The AQI and a discussion of current fire impacts on air quality are available to the public via the APCD website www.slocleanair.org. Instructions are also provided to receive air quality information via email, page or text message.

###

H:\OUTREACH\Press Material\2009\08_28_09smoke.doc