



NEWS RELEASE: May 11, 2009

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New Program Launched to Increase Air Quality Awareness throughout SLO County

Inauguration Air Quality Flag Program

Tuesday, May 12 at 12:30 p.m.

Carrisa Plains School

9640 Carrisa Highway (Highway 58), Carrizo Plains

The San Luis Obispo County Air Pollution Control District (APCD) has launched a new outreach program to inform the public on the local air quality throughout the region. Used in many regions throughout the United States, the Air Quality Index (AQI) uses a color-coded scale for reporting daily air quality. This is an important outreach tool to increase awareness of daily air quality throughout the County by making information easily assessable. In addition, the AQI will also increase the District's effectiveness at reaching the community with immediate health information to take special precautions when our region is impacted by smoke from wildfires or high wind dust events.

In partnership with schools throughout the region, the APCD is also launching an Air Quality Flag Program to provide schools with enhanced tools to help children, their parents and school personnel become better informed on air pollution levels. Using color-coded flags according to the AQI, school officials will fly the flag on the school flagpole which corresponds to the daily AQI forecast color. **The first AQ Flag will be flown at Carrisa Plains School on Tuesday, May 12 at 12:30 p.m.** Children will participate in an educational program to learn about air quality. This Flag Program will be expanded to school sites throughout the County. For more information contact Gary Arcemont at 781-5912.

The AQI was developed by the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and is a user-friendly index for reporting daily air quality. It tells you how clean or polluted your air is, and what associated health effects might be a concern for you. The AQI focuses on health effects individuals may experience within a few hours or days after breathing polluted air. The AQI is currently available to the public via the APCD website www.slocleanair.org, email, pager messages and text messages. You can also sign up to receive the daily air quality forecast via email, page or text message by subscribing online at www.enviroflash.info/

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