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ONE FOR ALL – ALL FOR ONE

Doing Your Share For Cleaner Air

One seems like such a small number. What can I do? What difference will my one business make? The simple fact is that one person or one business can have a significant impact on the quality of our air. The question is, then, what *do* you do? Or maybe, what don't you do?

From the **perspective of a business or a consumer**, it may be difficult to keep a laundry list of good air quality choices in mind when making day-to-day decisions. That is why, in early 2006, Air Quality Partners of Susquehanna Valley began to think about **ways to make the message easier and information more readily available**.

“Regarding our approach, **we have made some changes**, but one thing has stayed the same: our slogan,” said Mike Ridgeway, Outreach Coordinator for the Air Quality Partnership. “The statement [Do Your Share For Cleaner Air] still packs a punch because **the quality of the air we breathe depends on individuals making conscious choices to contribute to the health of our community.**”

The key, of course, is information. Helping you “Do Your Share” is the new user friendly, interactive website (www.AirQualityPartners.org). If you take the time to click on over the next time you are online, you will enjoy learning about the air quality in our area. Here are a few other things we are doing to get information out:

1) A public awareness **billboard campaign** during the summer months of 2006 capitalized on two partnerships with two appropriate messages. The first simply said “Don't drive alone” and was **directing people to Commuter Services**; which is a free service that helps commuters find people in their area who are sharing a ride or willing to share a ride. Go to www.pacommuterservices.com for more info on how to find a ride and save money! The second billboard message, **“Stop at the click,” is a simple but important way to reduce ground-**

level ozone when refueling a vehicle during the summer months. Turkey Hill Minit Markets supported this effort.

2) A **monthly e-newsletter** that communicates up-to-date local information and tips for improving air quality to business and individuals. **This service is free** and many companies in the Susquehanna Valley are finding the e-newsletter a useful tool for change. Go to our website to sign up for the e-newsletter.

3) “Stop at the Click” is an actual program where **stickers are placed at gas station pumps** to remind customers to not overfill their gas tanks. Spillage and fumes from over filling gas tanks greatly contribute to ground-level ozone and increase risk for health problems related to breathing.

4) **Free envelope stuffers** for businesses are pre-designed for each month coordinating with seasonal things to help improve our air quality. These are also requested through the website and are **especially nice for business-to-business contacts as well as reaching the employee base** with a simple tip to focus on each month.

5) A customized **point-of-purchase campaign** was launched with Lowes of Lancaster during the ozone season. These **noticeable display pieces hang in the lawn and garden department** and inform consumers about the benefits of having electric powered lawnmowers and trimmers as well as ways to start a charcoal grill without creating ground-level ozone (use a briquette or electric coil).

6.) “Adventures in Air Quality,” **a free children’s activity book** has recently been created to educate students in grades 3-6. This 15-page booklet has fun educational activities such as crossword puzzles, mazes, matching, and coloring. Children will love following Miguel and Megan from school, where they learn about air quality, to their community, where they **identify factors such as ozone and particle pollution**. Order Adventures in Air Quality for a child in your life today! Just go to www.AirQualityPartners.org.

Consumers are just as important as business when it comes to improving air quality in the Susquehanna Valley. **Sadly, “Consumers remain depressingly ignorant about the**

environmental impact of what they do,” said Joel Makower, executive editor of GreenBiz.org in an article by Bryan Walsh of Time Magazine.

In order to keep you from being “depressingly ignorant” lets have **a brief lesson in Air Quality so you can make wise choices regarding your health.** If you didn’t already know, there are two specific pollutions that the Air Quality Partnership of the Susquehanna Valley tracks: Particle Pollution (PM2.5) and Ozone Pollution.

Particle Pollution is tiny drops of liquid or small particles of dust, metals and other materials that float in the air. Some particles are large or dark enough to be seen, others are so small that they can only be detected with an electron microscope -- fine particles (less than 2.5 micrometers in diameter (PM2.5)). Particle pollution comes from a variety of natural and man-made sources such as cars, diesel buses and trucks, power plants and forest fires. PM2.5 and other fine Particle Pollution can accumulate in the respiratory system and cause decreased lung function, increased respiratory symptoms and disease, aggravated asthma, chronic bronchitis, painful or difficult breathing and shortness of breath. Sensitive groups that appear to be at greatest risk include the elderly, individuals with cardiopulmonary disease such as asthma, and children.

Environmental effects of PM2.5 include reduced visibility in parts of the United States. In many areas, the visual range has been reduced 70 percent from natural conditions. In the East, the current range is only 14-24 miles vs. a natural visibility of 90 miles. In the West, the current range is 33-90 miles vs. a natural visibility of 140 miles. Fine particles can also remain suspended in the air and travel long distances. For example, exhaust from a diesel truck in Los Angeles can end up over the Grand Canyon!

Ozone Pollution is formed at ground-level, where we breathe and should not be confused with stratospheric ozone that protects us from the sun's harmful rays. In the summer, sunlight and high temperatures 'bake' pollutants emitted by motor vehicles, power plants, industrial manufacturing and other sources to form high levels of ground-level ozone, commonly known as smog.

High accumulations of ozone in the lower atmosphere near ground level can be harmful to people, animals, and crops. In fact, the Lung Association of America says that ground level ozone can cause serious lung damage and difficulty in breathing, especially among children,

older adults and people with respiratory problems. Ground-level ozone can also cause shortness of breath, coughing, wheezing, headaches, nausea and eye irritation.

As a coalition dedicated to improving air quality in the Susquehanna Valley, we increase the public's understanding on the impact of air pollution; provide alerts for days with high air pollution with forecasts and declared Action Days; make available health effects information and guidelines to prevent or reduce exposure; and encourage voluntary actions to reduce air pollution emissions, specifically on "Action Days." For more information please visit

www.AirQualityPartners.org