

RAQC Gears Up for a Busy 2005

At its December board meeting the Regional Air Quality Council (RAQC) approved the 2005 Work Plan & Budget, which includes new programs and projects and enhancements on existing efforts.

Much of the RAQC's work in 2005 will focus on voluntary ozone mitigation projects – with the goal of meeting the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) new standard for ozone pollution. When the region first violated the new standard in 2003, the RAQC and its various stakeholders began working immediately to identify ozone-reduction projects.

The Early Action Compact

The region participated in The Early Action Compact – a program developed by the EPA to allow states to submit a federally-enforceable State Implementation Plan (SIP) earlier than the traditional process requires. In exchange for a comprehensive plan, the EPA agreed to defer any potential nonattainment designation so long as the nonattainment area meets the new standard by 2007. The SIP – The Ozone Action Plan – outlined a variety of ozone-reduction strategies, however, did not include a voluntary ozone outreach and education plan, which is a vital component in maintaining compliance. The RAQC is currently working with stakeholders to develop a comprehensive ozone outreach and education campaign.

Enhanced Outreach and Education

RAQC staff began to identify potential funding opportunities for a large-scale outreach, advertising, education, and evaluation program. Last fall, the RAQC was able to take part in the Denver Regional Council of Governments' Transportation Improvement Program process and secure funding through a federal Congestion Mitigation/Air Quality grant. With additional funding, RAQC staff will be able to work extensively with local governments on ozone education projects as well as engage in a full-scale advertising and outreach campaign. In addition, the grant will fund an expansion and

enhancement of the current *Repair Your Air* campaign to further identify and repair high-polluting vehicles. The next couple of years are critical for the region in terms of meeting EPA's new standard and the RAQC looks forward to working with its partners to ensure compliance by 2007.

Diesel Retrofit and Outreach Efforts

In addition to enhanced ozone efforts, the RAQC will continue its diesel efforts by wrapping up the *Clean Yellow Fleets for Blue Skies* school bus emission reduction program (see related article) and implementing a new *Diesel Initiative for Retrofit Technology* program, which will identify an off-road fleet for a retrofit project (see related article). The RAQC is also working with the City and County of Denver to retrofit a portion of its heavy-duty vehicle fleet in an attempt to reduce pollution from vehicles traveling through neighborhoods (see related article).

For more information on the RAQC's upcoming programs and projects, visit the web site at www.raqc.org or call (303) 629-5450. ■

Meet RAQC's Two New Staff Members

In anticipation of increased activities for 2005, the Regional Air Quality Council (RAQC) has added two new staff members – Sarah Sullivan and Sarah Schmitz.

Before joining the RAQC, Sarah Sullivan was a full-time intern for the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment's Air Pollution Control Division. Sarah joins the RAQC as a program coordinator and will help manage the day to day activities of the RAQC's diesel and high-emitting programs, among other duties. Sarah can be reached at (303) 629-5450, ext. 290 or ssullivan@raqc.org.

Sarah Schmitz recently joined the RAQC as communications coordinator. In her position, she will assist with the coordination of the RAQC's communications and outreach efforts, including the upcoming ozone outreach and education program. Sarah came to the RAQC

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LOCAL GOVERNMENT HIGHLIGHT

The City and County of Denver is set to launch a voluntary diesel reduction effort.

Beginning this month, the Public Works and Environmental Health departments will install equipment on nearly 30 heavy-duty diesel vehicles in order to reduce harmful emissions.

City staff have identified a number of street sweepers and trash trucks – which travel frequently through Denver neighborhoods – as priority for receiving the emission reduction technology.

The retrofit reduction project utilizes a closed crankcase filtration system, which eliminates emissions emitted from the

crankcase. It is estimated that this technology can achieve up to a 15 percent reduction in hydrocarbon, particulate matter, and carbon monoxide emissions.

The City's fleet will also be using biodiesel fuel, a blend of petroleum diesel and soybean oil. It is estimated that biodiesel achieves a 20 percent reduction in hydrocarbon emissions and 12 percent reductions in both particulate matter and carbon monoxide.

For more information, contact Steve McCannon, RAQC, at (303) 629-5450, ext. 230 or Robert Castaneda, City and County of Denver, at (303) 865-3900. ■

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from United Way of Larimer County where she worked as an intern in the marketing department while finishing her last semester of school. Sarah can be reached at (303) 629-5450, ext. 210 or sschmitz@raqc.org.

The RAQC looks forward to having these two bright, enthusiastic individuals join its staff and hope you will have a chance to work with them in the near future. ■

Twelve Area School Districts Using Biodiesel

The Regional Air Quality Council (RAQC) – in conjunction with 16 Front Range school districts – launched the Clean Yellow Fleets for Blue Skies (CYFBS) school bus emission reduction project last October.

Twelve of the 16 participating school districts are already using biodiesel fuel – a blend of 80 percent petroleum diesel and 20 percent vegetable oil. The remaining four school districts will begin fueling their fleets with the less polluting fuel within the next few months. It is estimated that the use of biodiesel fuel will reduce particulate matter (PM), carbon monoxide (CO), and hydrocarbon (HC) emissions by 12 to 20 percent.

In addition to utilizing biodiesel, the districts began the installation of diesel oxidation catalysts. These units are typically installed in place of the muffler and breakdown pollutants into harmless gases as they pass through the exhaust system. These devices are estimated to reduce PM, CO, and HC emissions by 20 to 66 percent.

The CYFBS program is a \$1.35 million federal, grant-funded program. The RAQC received an initial grant in the amount of \$400,000 grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Clean School Bus USA program. The program was expanded with an award of \$950,000 through the Congestion Mitigation / Air Quality grant

program. The goal of the program is to equip up to 1,000 school buses in the region with emission reduction technology and fuel. For more information, contact Steve McCannon at smccannon@raqc.org or (303) 629-5450, ext. 230. ■

Stakeholders to Consider SIP Revisions

The Regional Air Quality Council (RAQC) is working with the State's Air Pollution Control Division and other stakeholders to update the current air quality maintenance plans this year.

Revisions will be made to the carbon monoxide and particulate matter (PM10) maintenance plans. Changes include updates using the new MOBILE6.2 model and the Denver Regional Council of Government's COMPASS transportation model, as well as evaluating current mobile sources strategies, including oxygenated gasoline and inspection / maintenance programs.

RAQC will be convening a stakeholder group to consider the potential revisions (visit www.raqc.org for more information). The proposed plans will go before the RAQC this summer and the Air Quality Control Commission next fall for approval. Once the plan is approved, it will be sent to the legislature in 2006 for review and approval before submittal to EPA. ■

Upcoming Events:

February 3
RAQC Board Meeting

February 17
AQCC Meeting

Helpful Contacts:

RAQC
(303) 629-5450

State Air Pollution Control Division
(303) 692-3100

Air Quality Hotlines
(303) 758-4848 or
(303) 782-0211

Reminders:

When a RED Air Pollution Advisory is issued:

- follow mandatory residential burning restrictions

- limit driving by combining errands

- carpool or take public transportation

- visit the web site at <http://apcd.state.co.us> for more information

- call one of the two air quality hotline numbers operated by the State's Air Pollution Control Division: (303) 758-4848 or (303) 782-0211 for more information

www.raqc.org

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RAQC Awarded EPA Off-Road Retrofit Grant

The Regional Air Quality Council (RAQC) is set to launch a new program – Diesel Initiative for Retrofit Technology (DIRT) – which was recently awarded a grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The \$75,000 grant will be used to retrofit between 20 and 30 off-road diesel vehicles, such as those commonly found at construction sites. The program will target fleets working on construction projects in sensitive areas, such as schools or hospitals. Potential projects include hospital expansions and renovations, new school construction, or any projects which affect people who are young, elderly, or have pre-existing health conditions. Once the installation of the retrofit equipment is completed, it is estimated that diesel emissions around the project site will be reduced by approximately 30 percent.

For more information, contact Steve McCannon at smccannon@raqc.org or (303) 629-5450, ext. 230. ■

RAQC Welcomes New Board Member

The Regional Air Quality Council (RAQC) welcomes its newest member – the Honorable Susan Sandstrom, Councilwoman for the City of Aurora.

Ms. Sandstrom was appointed by Gov. Owens to take the place of former member Ed Tauer, who resigned when he was elected Mayor of Aurora last fall.

In addition to her upcoming work with the RAQC, Ms. Sandstrom is Chair of Aurora’s Management and Finance Committee, a member of Aurora Code Enforcement and Redevelopment committee, and Public Safety/Court. She is also the current chair of the General Employee’s Retirement Plan Board, a past member of Citizens’ Advisory Budget Committee, and a past member of Arapahoe County Citizens’ Budget Advisory Committee. She is currently a member of Colorado Child

Support Commission, the Cherry Creek School District Legislative Network, and the Colorado Society of Certified Public Accountants and Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA). She also serves as a board



member and treasurer for the Zach Burn Foundation. She is a graduate of the Aurora Fire Department Citizens’ Fire Academy and a participant in the Aurora Police Department Citizens’ Police Academy.

The RAQC looks forward to working with Councilwoman Susan Sandstrom in the coming months. Please join us in welcoming her. ■

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