FACES Fact:
In most urban areas of California, motor vehicles are the largest source of air pollutants (California Air Resources Board).

FACES Update:
We would like to send a special thank you to all of the FACES participants and families for your hard work and dedication over the past eight years. We truly appreciate your time and commitment to FACES. This study could not have happened without you! Now that the data collection is over, we will continue to send you information, updates and study results as they are ready.

Fresno County Asthma Profile:
Every year, the California Department of Public Health puts together asthma data for each county in the state of California. The profiles highlight how asthma is affecting the county and provide support for local planning and interventions around asthma.

The most important findings for Fresno County are about asthma hospitalizations and emergency department visits due to asthma.

Children under the age of seventeen are hospitalized at higher rates and have more emergency room visits when compared to the state as a whole. Adults over 18 in the county have higher rates of emergency room visits for asthma but less asthma hospitalizations due to asthma as compared to the state rates. You can find more information about asthma at www.californiabreathing.org and we have also included a copy of the Fresno County Asthma Profile with this newsletter.

Getting Involved:
Over the summer, many of you participated in a survey for FACES and let us know some topics that you were interested in. There was a lot of interest in learning about different air quality and asthma agencies and groups. In response to that, we will be highlighting different groups in the upcoming newsletters that you can get involved with. This newsletter will highlight some of the governmental agencies, while the upcoming newsletters will talk about local grassroots organizations and other agencies.

Environmental Protection Agency
Also known as the EPA, this is a national agency with the mission of protecting human health and the environment. Over 17,000 people work at the EPA including scientists, engineers, lawyers, and many other specialists. The EPA conducts studies about the environment – wildlife, water, air quality, etc. and then is responsible for developing national regulations for protection of the environment.
The EPA makes rules to meet standards for clean air and water. These rules control the amount of pollution that can be released by such things as cars, trucks, power plants, and the kinds of chemicals and bacteria/viruses that are prohibited from being in the water supply. Each state makes plans to carry out these regulations. For air pollution, California can make rules that are stricter than those made by the EPA.

**California Air Resources Board (CARB)**

CARB is the California state agency that has responsibility to assure that air pollution control rules are made and carried out. The United States Clean Air Act gave California the right to create air pollution regulations that are stronger than the national regulations. CARB has power over the following sources of air pollution:

- goods movement (railroad, ports, trucks)
- agricultural activities
- climate change
- motor vehicle emissions and fuels
- toxics
- consumer products
- smoke management

CARB also conducts research studies in order to create more effective rules. They put together many information booklets for the public about indoor and outdoor air quality, asthma, health, participation, schools, different air pollutants, toxics, fuels, vehicles, and many other topics. Their publications are available at www.arb.ca.gov or you can order free copies by calling (800) 242-4450. The CARB Board meetings are held once a month in Sacramento and they are open to anyone. The public is able to make comments about the different agenda items at the meeting. For more information about the meetings, visit www.arb.ca.gov/board/board.htm. If you are interested in CARB’s publication about Public Participation, you may also ask Leah at the Fresno office at (559) 294-6700.

**San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD)**

The SJVAPCD is a local agency under CARB that is in charge of air pollution rules for stationary sources such as factories, agriculture, and plants. Anyone who operates a facility that emits air pollution must obtain an operating permit from the local air district. Unfortunately, the SJVAPCD does not do a lot of work with air pollution that comes from vehicles, which accounts for a lot of the pollution in Fresno.

Their website www.valleyair.org provides valuable information on air quality issues specific to Fresno and the surrounding area. Here you can find information on the daily **Air Quality Index** (AQI), which is a measure of the level of air pollution each day. The AQI lets us know which days it is healthy or unhealthy for outside activities. The SJVAPCD also has information about “Spare the Air” days, which are days when the AQI is unhealthy and people are encouraged to do what they can to not pollute that day, such as carpool.

Other services the Air District Provides are:

- **Smoking vehicles** (you can report smoking vehicles you see to them)
- **Lawnmower Exchange Program**
- **Check Before You Burn Forecast** (Wood Burning)
- **Lower-Emission School Bus Program**

The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District holds monthly Community Groups meetings at the Central District Office. At these meetings community groups and community leaders can learn about upcoming District rule-making activities, and Governing Board meetings. These meetings are also a place for the public to participate and be heard on their concerns about health and air quality. For meeting information, call (559) 230-6000.

It is important to recognize that although these agencies exist to help improve air quality, there is still A LOT of work to be done!
Wood Smoke

Health Effects of Wood Smoke
There are many hazardous chemicals found in wood smoke, and some may even cause cancer.

Wood smoke not only affects outdoor air quality, it can also be harmful indoors, especially to individuals with preexisting respiratory illnesses such as asthma.

The incredibly small particles emitted when wood is burned pose a risk because they can travel farther into the lungs, leading to serious health effects. Wood smoke exposure, like other air pollution, can cause:

• Burning eyes
• Runny nose
• Bronchitis
• Aggravation of heart and respiratory problems such as asthma.

If you are planning to use a wood-burning stove or fireplace this holiday season, the Environmental Protection Agency has some tips for you to reduce costs and air pollution:

• Upgrade to an EPA-certified woodstove.
• Burn seasoned hardwoods which burn hotter and produce less smoke.
• Never burn trash or treated wood which can emit harmful chemicals.
• Clean your stovepipe and chimney to reduce the risk of a fire.
• Always burn small hot fires that provide the most heat with the least pollution.
• Don’t leave the fire to smolder—this doesn’t do much in the way of heating and can increase air pollution.

The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution District enforces a “Check Before You Burn” program that prohibits the use of fireplaces and woodstoves using pellets, manufactured logs and wood on days when air quality is poor.

Call 1-800-870-1037 to “check before you burn”

You can also find more information about this program at www.valleyair.org. We have included the “Check Before You Burn” pamphlet with this newsletter for your convenience.

Questions or Comments? Want to Receive this Newsletter? Have an Article or Story you Want to Submit?

Then Contact Your Friendly FACES Staff Member at the Office by phone at (559) 294-6700 or electronically at Ifaces@internet-zone.net

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