

Visit us at www.cleanaircounts.org

February 2006

Focus on Communities

5 TONS PER DAY!

Clean Air Counts will result in reducing pollution by five (5) Tons a day.

Clean Air Counts is a northeastern Illinois regional initiative to reduce ozone-causing emissions, thereby improving air quality and enabling economic development.

It is a collaborative effort between the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus, City of Chicago, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 5, and Illinois Environmental Protection Agency. This multi-year initiative seeks to achieve specific and significant reductions in targeted smog-forming pollutants and major reductions in energy consumption.

This program will reduce costly health problems caused by air quality and demonstrate a voluntary approach to air quality improvement.

Did you know that the Chicago Metropolitan Area exceeded Air Quality Indices 4 times in winter in 2005?

Throughout the Chicago Metropolitan Area businesses, institutions, and communities are voluntarily improving air quality through the Clean Air Counts regional air quality improvement program.

Municipalities, government agencies, and authorities – including school board, park districts, and others – can play a major role in improving the region's air quality. Government bodies can exercise a tremendous market influence, not only through legislation, but by choices they make as employers, purchasers,

service providers, and property owners.

In addition to joining as a Clean Air Counts Adopter and implementing emission reduction strategies, all governing bodies can become a Clean Air Community. Becoming a Clean Air Community is an excellent way for local governments to demonstrate their commitment to clean air.

Currently 27 communities participate in Clean Air Counts with 20 of those communities warranting special certifications. This newsletter provides Campaign updates, information



Wilmette promotes Clean Air Counts on Vehicle Stickers

for getting involved in Clean Air Counts and information on grants for communities. •

Winter Air Pollution Days Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups

Did you know that the Chicago Metropolitan Area exceeded air quality indices four times in winter last year and that the four days were deemed unhealthy for sensitive groups?

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, Chicagoland had Particulate Matter levels that exceeded healthy levels four times in winter representing 44% of days Chicagoland had unsafe levels of PM.

Particulate matter, called PM, is very small dust and soot particles. PM10 is matter that is 10 micrometers in diameter. That would be about one-seventh the width

of a strand of human hair. PM2.5 is even smaller – measuring 2.5 micrometers or less. PM10 and PM2.5 are generally created during a burning process and include fly ash (from power plants), carbon black (from automobiles and diesel engines) and soot (from fireplaces and wood stoves).

Health Implications

PM is a health concern because of its impacts on the very young and old. These fine and coarse particles can accumulate in the respiratory system and are associated with numerous health effects.

When exposed to PM, people with existing heart or lung diseases—such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, congestive heart disease, or ischemic heart disease—are at increased risk of premature death or admission to hospitals or emergency rooms.

When exposed to PM, children, the elderly and people with existing lung disease may not be able to breathe as deeply or vigorously as they normally would, and they may experience symptoms such as coughing and shortness of breath. PM can increase susceptibility to respiratory

Energy efficient lighting and ENERGY STAR® office equipment provide alternative resources and management systems for light design and controls, light bulbs and office equipment in order to reduce energy usage. Effective programs save money on utility bills and maintenance costs while reducing the levels of fossil fuel emissions at power plants.

Energy efficient buildings and homes ensure optimum utilization of heating and cooling for air and water through improved insulation and other tactics. This results in greater building comfort, lower utility costs and reduced levels of fossil fuel emissions at power plants.

Low VOC paints, cleaning products and building materials are cost competitive, as effective as traditional products, create less eye and respiratory irritation and reduce emissions of smog-forming VOCs into the atmosphere.

Natural landscaping uses native plants, wildflowers and grasses to landscape around large properties. It significantly reduces maintenance costs and virtually eliminates the tons of VOCs emitted into the air by lawn mowers and other maintenance equipment.

Workforce transportation options provide alternative methods to reduce the number of commuters driving alone to work. These strategies improve worker productivity, and, in some cases, offer tax benefits to both employers and employees.

Diesel retrofit programs use retrofit technologies and cleaner fuels or additives to reduce emissions of soot, smog-forming pollutants and other toxic air pollution from diesel-powered vehicles.

Becoming a Certified Clean Air Counts Community

The Clean Air Communities designation is intended to reward communities that have demonstrated a commitment to improving air quality in the Chicago metropolitan region.

The Communities Campaign is overseen by the municipal members of the Clean Air Communities Campaign in cooperation with the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus, the City of Chicago Department of Environment, and Councils of Governments representatives.

The Communities Campaign challenges communities to engage in the Clean Air Counts campaign at one of the four (4) levels of participation.



The platinum level is the highest commitment.



The Gold level is for communities that demonstrate leadership by implementing a comprehensive policy to reduce emissions.



The Silver level is for communities that commit to reduce emissions through simple measures to improve air quality.



The bronze level is for communities that raise community awareness of air quality problems and how to combat them.

For community assistance please call the Communities Campaign Coordinator, Ben Mjolsness, at (312) 744-7311. •



Illinois EPA Director Renee Cipriano joined Naperville Mayor A. George Pradel (right) and Naperville Director of Public Utilities Allan Poole to celebrate Earthday and the success of Naperville's Renewable Energy. Naperville is also a Bronze Level Clean Air Counts Community and the home to the Clean Air Counts Campaign newest Demonstration Corridor.

If you would like information about Clean Air Counts in DuPage and Will County, please contact Ruth Myers at (630) 407-6730. •

Continued from page 1...

infections and can aggravate existing respiratory diseases, such as asthma and chronic bronchitis, causing more use of medication and more doctor visits.

What You Can Do

Fortunately, there is a lot that we can all be doing to reduce harmful particulate

matter and the Clean Air Counts Campaign staff wants to help you reduce particulate matter by helping you, your business or municipality

- Be More Energy Efficient
- Use Air Friendly Materials
- Reduce Automobile Related Emissions
- Implement a Diesel

Retrofit Program

To schedule an appointment or receive more information about Clean Air Counts, please contact Eve Pytel at 773-929-5552 ext 236.

Sources EPA, UTAH Clean Air, Air Now, Partners for Clean Air•

Start Planning A Lawn Care Buyback Event Now

Did you know that “one old gas powered lawn mower running for an hour emits as much pollution as driving 650 miles in a 1992 model automobile” and that Clean Air Counts can help your community rid itself of polluting lawnmowers?

The use of gas-powered lawn care equipment contributes to regional smog and air quality problems by emitting volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and nitrogen oxides (NOx).

These pollutants contribute to increased production of ground-level ozone, or smog, that inflames lung tissue, aggravates a range of respiratory ailments

(including asthma), and can lead to cancer.

To promote the use of low-emission equipment, communities can organize Lawn Care Buyback events that give residents the opportunity to trade in their older, gas-powered lawn care equipment in exchange for a discount on the purchase of cleaner (electric, battery-powered, or non-motorized) equipment.

Clean Air Counts (CAC) Communities are eligible to participate in the Regional Lawn Care Buyback Program, which offers grants of up to \$12,600 to cover equipment disposal, labor,

and all other event costs.

To date, the following CAC Communities have hosted and promoted Lawn Care Buyback events for their residents: the City of Chicago, Village of Northbrook, Village of Oak Park, Village of Round Lake Park, and the Village of Wilmette.

Spring seems a long way off, but now is the perfect time to start planning your event. For more information on becoming a CAC Community and/or CAC's various grant programs, please contact Benjamin Mjolsness at (312) 744-7311 or benja-min.mjolsness@cityofchicago.org•

At lawn mower buy back events, people trade polluting lawn mower like this



For rebates for air friendly electric and push mowers like this



Resources To Improve

Air Quality in Your Community



Lights For Learning Fundraiser... A Bright Idea!: To run this exciting fundraising opportunity that couples energy awareness and earning funds for your school or organization contact Grace Burek @ 877-MW-ESTAR or email L4L@appliedproactive.com.



Bike Valet Services: Here's a way to bring more people to your summer festivals and events without the hassle of increased traffic congestion and parking accommodations. The Chicagoland Bicycle Federation's Bike Valet Program provides bicycle racks and valet attendants to safely park and keep bikes secure while attendees enjoy themselves at your event. The Bike Valet Program is used at many of the downtown Chicago events including Taste of Chicago, the Air and Water Show and Blues Fest. For more information, please contact Anne Davis at (312) 427-3325, ext. 241 or anne@biketraffic.org•

Clean Air Counts at Community Events

Summer festivals celebrate communities and bring people together. They can also cause a lot of pollution.

We hope your community will make your event a Clean Air event by implementing at least one the following Clean Air strategies:

- Prohibit vendors from using gas generators or limit use to food vendors.
- Encourage walking or bicycling by providing a bicycle valet service.
- Prohibit parking on the grass by encouraging transit or using a shuttle service to shuttle people from parking lots to the festival grounds.
- Provide recycling at the fair.
- Incorporate a lawn mower buyback or gas can replacement station at the fair.
- Provide Clean Air Counts materials at community information table..•



When you clean house do you dirty the air?

Clean Air Counts provides drop in articles to municipalities, businesses, organizations for their newsletters to provide information about energy efficiency, air friendly, cleaning products, Low VOC paints and products, and landscaping.

If you are looking for content for your newsletter, please contact Eve at egpytel@sophrosune.org or 773-929-5552 Ext. 236 to request an article

Clean up your act with low-VOC cleaning products

When you clean house do you dirty the air? Cleaning the toilet, using dish and laundry detergent, mopping the floors and scrubbing the countertops are necessary chores, but choosing the wrong products can unnecessarily pollute the air.

Many cleaning products release volatile organic compounds (VOCs), a major component in the formation of ozone or smog. In fact, with the exception of getting vehicles off the road, using low- or no-VOC cleaning products can reduce more emissions than any other environmentally-sound act.

There are a couple of key characteristics and ingredients to look for in a low-VOC cleaning product. Non-toxic, biodegradable, sodium citrate, bicarbonate, carbonate or silicate, and vegetable-based surfactants and solvents (pine and citrus oils contain VOCs, but at lower amounts than many products) are all descriptions used in safer cleaning products.

Try these products, which tend to be lower in (or free from) toxicity and available at your local grocer or hardware store:

- Bon Ami
- 20 Mule Team Borax
- Dr. Bonner Castile Soap
- Ajax Lemon Fresh Liquid
- Mr. Clean
- Spic & Span
- Spic & Span Spray Bath Cleaner
- Murphy's Oil Soap
- Bathroom Duck

- Comet Liquid Bathroom Cleaner
- Orange or lemon oil
- Lemon Pledge Trigger
- SprayPlunger or drain snake

able; even some "natural" products may contain some caustic ingredients, such as pine oil, and so are labeled with "caution")

There are several products on the market that are toxic or contain ozone-causing chemicals. Many of these products, including Pinesol, Clorox, Lysol, ammonia and antibacterial soaps are highly toxic and unnecessary. Alternative, more environmentally-friendly products, like baking soda, vinegar, borax and Comet cleaner are equally efficient in cleaning the home. Also, purchase dye- and fragrance-free cleaners, which are typically lower in harmful agents than scented products.

Find out how you can make Clean Air Count by visiting www.cleanaircounts.org. Take a lead in making the air in your home and community cleaner, our quality of life better and our climate more inviting.

Clean Air Counts is a six-county Chicago regional initiative of the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency – Region V, City of Chicago and Illinois EPA. It seeks significant reductions in smog-forming pollutants and energy consumption.

Clean Air Counts is made possible through the support of The Chicago Community Trust, Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation, Grand Victoria Foundation, Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, and the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency.●

Adopter Spotlight: Village of Midlothian

The Village of Midlothian's residents form a close knit community located roughly 20 miles southwest of downtown Chicago. Under the leadership of Mayor Thomas J. Murawski, Midlothian joined the Clean Air Counts (CAC) Communities Campaign at the Bronze commitment level in spring 2005.

To start, the Village committed to raising public awareness of air quality issues by highlighting steps ordinary residents and businesses could take to positively affect air quality in the home, office, and beyond.

Midlothian's leadership, organized by Mayor Murawski and Village Trustee Terry Stephens, worked quickly to organize a combined Lawn Care Buyback and Gas Can Exchange event. This event offered residents the opportunity to

retire their old, polluting, gas-powered lawnmowers and other lawn care equipment, as well as leaky, ineffective gas cans kept in homes and garages for refueling lawnmowers or snowblowers.

In return, each resident that retired a lawnmower received a rebate of \$150 when they purchased an electric or non-motorized lawnmower. Residents turning in old gas cans were given brand new, spill-proof, environmentally friendly gas cans free of charge. When the day was over, the Village of Midlothian exchanged 114 gas cans and retired 13 old lawnmowers. Also turned in were several gas-powered chainsaws, weed whackers, and leaf blowers.

As part of their continuing commitment to educating the public about air quality,

the Village prepared articles on energy efficiency, paints and cleaning products that are safer for indoor air quality, choosing healthier forms of transportation (such as walking, biking, carpooling, using public transportation, and more), and reducing emissions from lawn care and landscaping activities.

These articles were published in the area newspaper, The Midlothian-Bremen Messenger, in July 2005, and the Village of Midlothian's quarterly newsletter, called "Tartan Tidings," in fall 2005.

Midlothian continues to expand its emissions reduction activities. In fact the Village Board of Trustees voted to implement the Midlothian Vehicle Management Idling Policy. This policy limits idling time to improve air quality while realizing significant savings in fuel and operating costs. •



Articles on energy efficiency, paints and cleaning products that are safer for indoor air quality were published in the area newspaper, The Midlothian-Bremen Messenger, in July 2005, and the Village of Midlothian's quarterly

Make Clean Air Count with Energy Efficient Lighting in your Home

What can save you more than \$8,000 over 30 years and also improve your ability to read at night? Energy-efficient lighting, of course.

By replacing standard bulbs with energy-efficient bulbs, you can save about \$78 a year, assuming a three-bulb purchase year. While the initial purchase of an energy-efficient bulb might result in a higher-than-average price, the savings incurred through their efficient use of energy and long operating life can offset the initial pinch of the item's cost.

To get the maximum cost benefit from these bulbs, they should be used in fixtures that are left on for hours at a time – like outdoor lanterns or security floodlights, hallways, landings, or your most lived-in rooms. A compact fluorescent light bulb costs about \$8, but can last 10 times longer than a regular bulb. Better yet, these bulbs use about 75 percent less energy, saving the average homeowner approximately \$26 in energy bills over the bulb's lifetime.

Benefits of energy-efficient lighting practices include:

- Reduced emissions of nitrogen oxide, carbon dioxide, and sulfur dioxide into the environment for better air quality
- Improve electricity system reliability
- Reduced electrical and cooling loads in buildings
- Lower electricity costs (roughly 10-15%)
- Lower maintenance costs
- More appropriate lighting levels
- Natural lighting is aesthetically pleasing

Find out how you can make Clean Air Count by visiting www.cleanaircounts.org. Make your home and/or community a leader at making our air cleaner, our quality of life better and our home climate more inviting. •

Grant Opportunities Available to Clean Air Counts Communities

The Clean Air Counts (CAC) Communities Campaign makes grants available for municipal adopters to utilize for special emission reduction programs. Funds may be used to offer Lawn Care Buyback (explained in detail in this newsletter) and Gas Can Exchange events to its constituents. Communities may also apply for grants to carry out energy efficient lighting retrofits in municipal facilities or install special emission reduction equipment on their fleet of diesel-powered vehicles. Following are brief summaries of current grant opportunities:

Gas Can Exchange Program: Portable gas cans, like those used to fuel lawnmowers and other equipment, account for a significant amount of smog-forming emissions. Storing traditional gas cans in the home or garage poses a health threat to inhabitants, as escaped toxic fumes may cause or aggravate respiratory ailments. Communities can address this issue by conducting events that allow citizens to trade in old gas cans and receive an

environmentally-friendly gas can free of charge. Grants of up to \$3,300 are available to cover all event costs.

Lawn Care Buyback Program: Grants of up to \$12,600 are available to cover all event costs. Please see page 3 for more information on CAC's Lawn Care Buyback program

Energy Efficient Lighting Program: Municipalities can save money and promote air quality at the same time by applying one or several energy efficient lighting practices. Energy efficient lighting reduces the amount of harmful emissions from power plants. One way communities can start saving energy is by installing LED traffic signals; these signals use 85% less energy and last much longer than standard lights. Another idea is to replace conventional T12 fluorescent light bulbs with more efficient T8 bulbs, which will result in energy savings of 20-40%. Grants are available to assist communities in identifying and implementing such strategies.

Diesel Retrofit Program: A diesel retrofit program is designed to reduce emissions of soot, smog-forming pollutants, and other toxic air pollution caused by diesel-powered vehicles. Using EPA-approved retrofit technologies, reductions in soot, hydrocarbon, and carbon monoxide emissions can make significant progress toward improving regional air quality. One technology, a diesel oxidation catalyst, can reduce particulate matter and carbon monoxide emissions by 10-40% and 40-90%, respectively. Another, a diesel particulate filter, can reduce particulate matter and carbon monoxide emissions by 60-90% and 50-90%, respectively. Grants are available to cover purchase and installation costs.

To apply for a grant, or for more information, please contact Ben Mjolsness at (312) 744-7311 or Benjamin.Mjolsness@cityofchicago.org. •

Clean Air Counts
171 N State Street
Chicago, IL 60601

MAKE A VISIBLE DIFFERENCE
JOIN CLEAN AIR COUNTS

WWW.CLEANAIRCOUNTS.ORG