

ON THE AIR

Winter
2008-09

A Newsletter about
Clean Air. Provided
by Spokane Regional
Clean Air Agency.

Happy 40th Spokane Clean Air, 1969-2009

We go back a few decades. And now, at forty, we take a moment to celebrate our “ruby” anniversary by remembering some of the history that got us here. In 1969, even before the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency was created, the Agency was born as the Spokane County Air Pollution Control Authority. In 2007, we changed our name to Spokane Regional Clean Air Agency.

During the early years, our tasks were figuring out what was in the air and where it was coming from. This was done mainly through chemistry and visual observations as air quality monitoring equipment was expensive and difficult to maintain. Two obvious sources of air pollution were the black smokestacks of industry and the rampant outdoor burning of residential and commercial garbage.

In reviewing archived photos and articles from the late 1960s, it’s remarkable how far we’ve come in cleaning up our air. Today, our air quality meets all health-based standards. In 2005, we were removed from “nonattainment”



In 1969, there were a couple of air quality monitoring locations, including the one pictured above on the roof of the Crown Zellerbach warehouse, near Freya St. and Ferry Ave. The photo on the left is from 1969 and one the right is the site today. The current air monitoring network consists of nine sites, including new sites in Spokane Valley, Liberty Lake, Airway Heights, and Deer Park.

status by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Since then, we have remained in attainment of all federal clean air standards.

Soot covered buildings are a thing of the past, as industry installed sophisticated air pollution control technologies. Technology has also made our cars much cleaner and our wood stoves less polluting and more efficient. Most of our well-traveled dirt roads have been paved and burning natural vegetation has been phased-out in our cities, towns and urban growth areas. Businesses are supporting commute trip reduction programs by encouraging employees to find new ways to get to work. The community is working together to secure funding to make our great city more bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly.

This isn't to say our work is done. A

new, more stringent federal standard for PM_{2.5} — fine particles like soot and smoke — was established in late 2006 and more recently, the acceptable limits for ground-level ozone (smog) were reduced to be more protective of public health. As our area grows, adding more people, cars and businesses to our airshed, we'll continue to face challenges to keep air quality within federal, health-based standards.

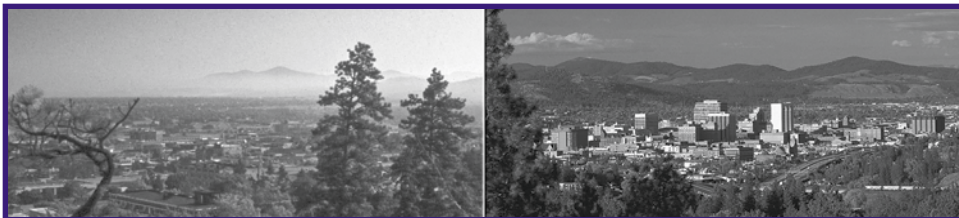
To continue our progress and maintain healthful air quality, we will need the continued involvement of our residents and business owners. The daily choices we each make have a collective impact on the quality of the air we share now and for the next 40 years. ■

William O. Dameworth
Bill Dameworth, Director

Air Quality Snapshots: THEN & NOW

Spokane Regional Clean Air Agency marks its fortieth year of working with you for clean air. We'd like to share some "then & now" highlights with you from the last four decades, including some archived photos.

When the Agency first began its work, "there was a disagreeable brown haze covering the city," according to Fred Shiosaki, the Agency's first director.



Industrial Emissions - Belching smokestacks discolored buildings. Industrial and commercial sources of air pollution were the initial focus for clean-up. This was a large undertaking for most industries, as air pollution control equipment had to be designed for each process, ordered, shipped,

and installed. Over the years, new equipment and improved operations have dramatically reduced air pollution from the commercial sector, which now accounts for less than 20% of air pollution sources.

Outdoor Burning - Smoke, soot and odors from outdoor burning were the source of many citizen complaints. Backyard burning was common as was burning piles of construction debris.



Residents burned trash outdoors until 1969, when this practice was banned and garbage collection services were expanded. When commercial businesses were no longer allowed to burn, dumpsters were purchased and businesses began recycling cardboard. Today, outdoor burning for disposal is limited to natural vegetation and only in outlying areas of the county on designated days. Natural vegetation is picked up at curbside in many areas and accepted at area recycling/transfer stations.



Transportation - Vehicles continue to be the largest contributor to air pollution. In the mid 1970s, unleaded gasoline became available and catalytic converters were installed on vehicles.

In the mid 1980s, the state initiated its vehicle emissions testing program to reduce carbon monoxide pollution. The area continued to see wintertime carbon monoxide problems at levels which exceeded federal, health-based standards, therefore, in the early 1990s, an oxygenated fuel program was introduced, which required a oxygenate additive in gasoline during the winter months. The program was a success and after five years, the program was discontinued as new automobile technology was able to do the job without oxygenated fuels.

Each of us has the ability to improve air quality. Learn how you can help us work on the challenges ahead by visiting our webpage: www.spokanecleanair.org. We also have a free Pollution Prevention Consultation Program for interested businesses. For details, call 477-4727, ext. # 114. ■

Study: Cleaner Air Increases Life Expectancy

According to researchers, reducing fine particles of smoke and soot from engines and industries have added as much as 15% of the 2.72 years of extra longevity seen in the U.S. since the early 1980s. The study, published in the New England Journal of Business on January 21, 2009, was led by Arden Pope, an epidemiologist at Brigham Young University. The study shows that changes in smoking habits are the biggest reason why Americans are living longer.

Pope and his researchers used life expectancy, economic, demographic and pollution data from 51 cities. They found that when fine particle pollution (smoke, soot) dropped by 10 micrograms per cubic meter, life expectancy rose by 31 weeks.

serve being identified. The hypothesis follows from previous work saying that exposure to particulate matter results in reduction in life expectancy. This study confirms what should be expected if all the work on air quality and health that has been done was in fact based on valid scientific reasoning.”

“The findings show there has been a real dividend from the efforts since the 1970s to improve air quality.”

Arden Pope, lead scientist

Hasselback did find some weaknesses with the study, saying that “It would improve the rigour of the study to be able to include data where

PM levels increased.”

According to Hasselback, the greatest strength in the study is that it adds another piece to the puzzle, and affirms the health improvement findings that we would expect to find if efforts to decrease PM concentrations were to improve health.

“This is a very reassuring study to support the work that is ongoing,” added Hasselback. ■

Funds for Woodstove Change-outs Winding Down

If you’ve been thinking about upgrading your old wood stove or fireplace insert, don’t delay as grant funding is nearly gone. Remaining funding should cover another 20-25 rebates between now and when the program ends April 15.

Since January 1, 2008, over 250 rebate vouchers have been issued to qualified applicants. The vouchers are good for \$600 off a wood or pellet device and \$800 off a natural gas or propane device.

Funding for the program is from federal and state grants; Avista; the Northwest Hearth, Patio and Barbecue Assn.; and Spokane Clean Air.

Program details and application forms are available at area woodstove shops and online at www.spokaneleanair.org. ■

The bigger the decline, the longer people began living. In some areas, such as Buffalo, New York where fine particles dropped by 13 -14 micrograms, people started living about 43 weeks longer.

Dr. Paul Hasselback, Medical Health Officer, B.C. Interior Health Authority, weighed in on the study, saying “On the surface, this appears to be a strong study, and the strengths de-

Spokane Clean Air on the Move!

Spokane Clean Air staff moved in our new offices on Monday, February 2. By the time this newsletter hits your mailbox, our unpacking should be done.

The move comes after 40 years of renting space, including the last 31 years at the Spokane Regional Health Building.

The agency purchased a building, located at **3104 E. Augusta Ave.**, west of Spokane Community College, to save money, which will be passed on to the taxpayers.

“The timing was right to purchase the building,” said Bill Dameworth, Spokane Clean Air Director.

The Agency’s website address and phones numbers remain the same. ■



◆ AIR QUALITY CALENDAR ◆

Happy New Year!

- Feb. 5: Board of Directors meeting, 9 a.m., Lower Level, Commissioners Hearing Room, Spokane County Public Works Bldg, 1026 W. Broadway Ave. Agendas and minutes are posted online.
- Feb. 13: EnviroKids' Club is hosting a special Valentine's Day celebration at Mobius Kids in honor of Mother Earth. There will be hands-on activities for children. For information call 477-4727, ext. # 114.
- Mar. 5: Board of Directors meeting, 9 a.m. Please check our website for meeting location. Soon, meetings will be held in our new office location at 3104 E. Augusta Ave.
- Apr. 2: Board of Directors meeting. Monthly meeting agendas available online at www.spokanecleanair.org.
- Apr. 11: Free Chipping & Composting Day, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., Fire Station #49 at Hwy 395 & Monroe Rd. For information call 477-4727.

2009 residential yard & garden debris burn days:
 April 3-6, and April 10-13 (eight days) for eligible county residents:
 Call Spokane Clean Air, 477-4727, for requirements
 and information about changes coming in 2010.

Agency to Post Violation Histories Online

At its December Board of Directors meeting, the Spokane Clean Air Board agreed unanimously to post public records of violation histories to the agency's website for easier public access.

Once the Notice of Violation (NOV) and associated penalty is resolved, information will be posted, including, but not limited to, NOV number, date of issuance, name of person(s)/business(es) the civil penalty was is-

sued to, location where violation(s) occurred, regulation(s) and/or law(s) cited, and other information.

Currently, this information is available to anyone making a public records request. Posting the information online, in a query-based format, should make it easier for citizens to access this information. It is estimated that this will be available online in Spring 2009. ■

Take Note!

On the Air is a publication of the Spokane Regional Clean Air Agency. Its purpose is to inform local residents on all aspects of outdoor air pollution. Please contact Lisa Woodard, *Editor*, with comments or story ideas:
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 (509) 477-4727

Burning Information:
 (509) 477-4710

Air Quality Index:
 (509) 477-2571

New Address:
 3104 E. Augusta Ave.
 Spokane, WA 99207

Web Address:
www.spokanecleanair.org

Board of Directors:

- Melissa Ahern, Member-at-Large
- Jeff Corkill, City of Spokane Representative
- Ed "Chuck" Crockett, Small Cities and Towns Representative
- Rose Dempsey, City of Spokane Valley
- Bonnie Mager, Spokane County Commissioner

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