



Director's Report

DECEMBER 2013

Top Stories of 2013

The year 2013 was a transitional period for air quality management in Washoe County. We saw the end of a long-term local control strategy and the beginning of new ways to deliver air quality information. We also experienced one of the worst air pollution episodes in history. Below are the top five AQMD stories of 2013.

5 - Suspension of the Oxygenated Fuels Program: In October, the District Board of Health suspended Regulation 040.095 (Oxygen Content of Motor Vehicle Fuels). The Oxygenated Fuels (Oxy-Fuels) program was first implemented in 1988 and successfully reduced carbon monoxide (CO) emissions from cars and trucks. The Oxy-Fuels program, along with the woodstove and smog check programs, helped Washoe County meet and maintain the federal CO air quality standards. As federal emission standards for new cars and trucks became more stringent, the incremental benefits of the Oxy-Fuel program diminished.

4 - December PM2.5 Episodes: A strong winter storm hit the Truckee Meadows in early December. This was followed with an extended period of strong temperature inversions, cold temperatures, and light winds. The Air Quality Index (AQI) reached Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups (AQI > 100) 14 times, including ten consecutive days between December 10 and 19. A Red burn code was issued 15 times compared to a total of five times for the entire 2012-13 season.

3 - Social Media: The AQMD launched Facebook and twitter in July. The AQI was delivered each day along with seasonal air quality information. A major success was connecting with important partners such as the National Weather Service and local media outlets. Air pollution episodes later in the year demonstrated the importance of social media in delivering accurate and consistent air quality information.

AIR QUALITY COMPARISON FOR DECEMBER

Air Quality Index Range		# OF DAYS DECEMBER 2013	# OF DAYS DECEMBER 2012
GOOD	0 to 50	1	14
MODERATE	51 to 100	16	17
UNHEALTHY FOR SENSITIVE GROUPS	101 to 150	14	0
UNHEALTHY	151 to 200	0	0
VERY UNHEALTHY	201 to 300	0	0
TOTAL		31	31

Air Quality Management Division

2 - 2035 Regional Transportation Plan: The Regional Transportation Commission of Washoe County adopted the 2035 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) in April. Long-range plans are the blueprints for our community's transportation system. The 2035 RTP is significant because it acknowledges how community design influences chronic diseases. Good community design promotes active transportation choices and a healthier community. Also, the RTP identified two food deserts where access to fresh and nutritious foods is limited. Including these issues in the RTP is a very important first step towards developing transportation policies that align with Health District goals.

1 - American and Rim Wildfires: Wildfires in the West are becoming more frequent and intense. Two large fires in California affected the Truckee Meadows from August 11 through September 9. Smoke from the American Fire near Foresthill, CA traveled north, then shifted east into Washoe County due to the afternoon Zephyr winds. A change in weather patterns around August 22 relieved our area from the American Fire smoke, but brought in smoke from the Rim Fire near Yosemite National Park. Fine particulate matter (PM2.5) levels during these episodes changed rapidly fluctuating between Moderate (AQI between 51 and 100) and Very Unhealthy (AQI > 200) at times. The AQI was greater than 100 for 16 days, including 12 consecutive days between August 22 and September 2. The Washoe County School District took precautionary measures to protect students' health by cancelling outdoor activities such as recesses and high school football games.

Dan Inouye, Acting Division Director

HIGHEST AQI NUMBER BY POLLUTANT

Air Quality

POLLUTANT	DEC 2013	YTD for 2013	DEC 2012	Highest for 2012
CARBON MONOXIDE (CO)	30	30	29	29
OZONE 8 hour (O3)	38	93	38	104
PARTICULATES (PM _{2.5})	136	174	97	105
PARTICULATES (PM ₁₀)	86	97	53	74

For the month of December 2013, the highest Air Quality Index (AQI) values reported was one hundred thirty-six (136) for PM2.5. There were no exceedances of Carbon Monoxide, Ozone or PM10. There was one (1) day the air quality was in the good range, sixteen (16) days the air quality was in the moderate range, and fourteen (14) days the air quality was unhealthy for sensitive groups.

Planning & Monitoring Activity

In February, staff will be presenting the AQMD's "Keep it Clean." campaign at the National Air Quality Conference in Durham, NC. Keep it Clean includes seasonal components for wintertime burn codes (Know the Code), ozone season (nOzone), and encouraging cycling as a transportation option (Rack Em Up).

*Dan Inouye, Branch Chief
Planning and Monitoring*

Permitting Activity

TYPE OF PERMIT	2013		2012	
	DECEMBER	YTD	DECEMBER	ANNUAL TOTAL
Renewal of Existing Air Permits	96	1356	96	1339
New Authorities to Construct	3	71	6	88
Dust Control Permits	3 (63 acres)	119 (1150 acres)	5 (118 acres)	105 (1420 acres)

Wood Stove Certificates	27	364	50	330
WS Dealers Affidavit of Sale	13 (7 replacements)	99 (61 replacements)	34 (21 replacements)	134 (83 replacements)
WS Notice of Exemptions	570 (8 stoves removed)	8356 (88 stoves removed)	361 (0 stoves removed)	7346 (83 stoves removed)

<i>Combined Total for both:</i> Asbestos Assessments and Asbestos Demo and Removal (NESHAP)	61	1027	88	1148
Asbestos Assessments	53	828	-	-
Asbestos Demo and Removal (NESHAP)	8	199	-	-

Compliance &
Inspection Activity

Staff reviewed thirty (30) sets of plans submitted to the Reno, Sparks or Washoe County Building Departments to assure the activities complied with Air Quality requirements.

Staff conducted forty-two (42) stationary source renewal inspections and fifty-three (53) gas station inspections in December 2013. Staff also conducted inspections on asbestos removal and construction/dust projects.

Permitting & Enforcement Report

The record number of Red Burn Code days during the month of December resulted in a significant increase in complaints received by the Air Quality Management Division. A total of 20 citizen complaints were received for fireplaces/woodstoves burning during the Red Burn Code. Nine of these complaints were received through the answering service after hours. The Enforcement Staff was able to respond to all complaints within an hour. The ultimate goal is to achieve voluntary compliance and have the residents extinguish their fires. During this episode, the Enforcement Staff did issue two Warning Notices of Violation to individuals that were not receptive to the request for voluntary compliance.

The extended Red Burn Code also highlighted the importance of the Sole Source Exemption for residences that depend on a fireplace/woodstove as their only source of heat. The list of approved Sole Source Exemptions in Washoe County has increased to twelve (12) single family residences. As a result of the recent economic challenges, a number of Sole Source applications have been received indicating an inability to pay for fuel or necessary repairs to old heating systems. In response to these requests, the determination was made to approve Temporary Exemptions for the duration of this Know the Code burn season for residences with mechanical failures. Letters have been issued to sixteen (16) residences informing them of the temporary approval and requirement to have the necessary repairs completed prior to the next season. A total of seventeen applications have been denied based on the applicants identifying an additional heat source but indicated the inability to pay for fuel. The denial letters have included contact information for energy assistance programs.

On December 5th, I attended a meeting of the Reno Chapter of the American Lung Association (ALA) focusing on preparations for their Annual Honor Award Dinner which will be held on January 24th at the Atlantis Casino Resort Spa in the Grand Ballroom. This years' dinner will honor Tom Dolan for his contributions to the community and is expected to be attended by several hundred of the most influential people in the Reno-Sparks area. Since this dinner is a major fund raising opportunity for the ALA, the Air Quality Management Division is supporting the cause by purchasing an advertisement in the evening program. The full page advertisement features the Keep it Clean Campaign including banners for Know the Code, Rack'em Up, and nOzone. This is just the latest example of the continued partnership between the ALA and Air Quality Management.

*Charlene Albee, Branch Chief
Permitting & Enforcement*

Enforcement Activity

COMPLAINTS	2013*		2012		
	DECEMBER	YTD	DECEMBER	YTD	Annual Total
Asbestos	1	22	0	18	18
Burning	0	4	0	8	8
Construction Dust	2	27	0	30	30
Dust Control Permit	0	11	1	7	7
General Dust	2	41	2	46	46
Diesel Idling	0	2	1	8	8
Odor	2	14	1	16	16
Spray Painting	0	10	1	5	5
Permit to Operate	2	25	2	55	55
Woodstove	1	12	0	16	16
TOTAL	8	168	8	209	209
NOV'S	DECEMBER	YTD	DECEMBER	YTD	Annual Total
Warnings	5	29	2	45	45
Citations	4	31	3	41	41
TOTAL	9	60	5	86	86

* Discrepancies in totals between monthly reports can occur because of data entry delays.

Notices of Violation (NOVs):

There were nine (9) Notice of Violations (NOV's) issued in the month of December 2013. There were five (5) NOV Warnings and four (4) NOV Citations.