



LET'S TAKE CARE OF OUR SUMMER AIR.
OzoneAware.org

For Immediate Release

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Summer Ozone Season Comes to an End

Front Range residents, local governments and businesses wage successful campaign to reduce ozone pollution.

Denver, Colo. (September 1, 2005) – The Regional Air Quality Council (RAQC) is marking the end of a successful ozone season, despite the fact that this summer was one of the hottest in Colorado history.

This summer, Denver did not violate the new, stricter eight-hour standard for ozone set by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), due in large part to the efforts of industry, local governments, and an enhanced education and awareness effort aimed at curbing ground-level ozone pollution.

The “Let’s Take Care of Our Summer Air” campaign asked Front Range residents, local governments and businesses to take simple actions to reduce emissions which cause ground-level ozone pollution. Ground-level ozone pollution is formed when emissions from everyday items combine with other pollutants and “cook” in the heat and sunlight. The highest ozone levels are usually recorded in the summer months when temperatures approach the high 80s and 90s and when the wind is stagnant.

With eight days of record high temperatures during the month of July and an average high for the month at 94.5 degrees, the weather was ripe for the formation of ground-level ozone pollution.

“We are encouraged that in the height of the summer ozone season – despite record-breaking temperatures – the region did not violate the eight-hour standard,” said Ken Lloyd, executive director of the RAQC. “While a number of variables are at play in the formation of ozone, we believe people, local governments and businesses working together made a difference this summer in reducing ozone levels. This gives us great confidence that we will meet our goal to demonstrate compliance with the standard by 2007.”

During the three-month summer ozone season, 23 Ozone Action Alerts were issued by meteorologists from the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE). The alerts notified citizens



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of a potential for elevated ozone levels due to the heat and asked people to take simple steps to help reduce ground-level ozone pollution.

In an August 2005 telephone survey of 400 Denver-area residents conducted by the RAQC, 37 percent of respondents said they had made lifestyle changes to reduce ozone pollution this summer. When asked what changes the respondents had made, 56 percent said they had reduced their driving. Emissions from automobiles are the primary contributor to ozone formation.

The RAQC launched its public awareness campaign in June using a series of paid media, outreach and education efforts to increase awareness and understanding of ground-level ozone pollution. The campaign was paid in part by CDPHE, Envirotech Systems Corp., the Colorado Department of Transportation and the StEPP Foundation. Other key partners included area local governments, who assisted with the dissemination of important educational information and commitments by public works departments to ensure gas caps on fleet vehicles were working properly.

“We want to thank Front Range residents, our partners and everyone else who made an effort to take care of our summer air. This campaign could not have been as successful as it was without the help of everyone involved. We look forward to starting right where we left off next summer,” said Lloyd.

Also, in August the EPA approved Denver’s Early Action Compact (EAC) plan. Under the EAC, state and local governments committed to start reducing ground-level ozone much sooner than required by the EPA. The region has until 2007 to maintain compliance and receive an official attainment designation from the federal government.

For additional information, please visit www.OzoneAware.org or the RAQC’s Web site at www.raqc.org or call (303) 629-5450.

About Regional Air Quality Council

The Regional Air Quality Council (RAQC) is the lead air quality planning agency for the seven-county Denver metropolitan area. In existence since 1989, the Council’s main purpose is to develop plans and programs to keep the region in compliance with federal air quality standards, with significant input from area citizens, business, and local governments. The RAQC also oversees the development and implementation of air quality outreach and education programs throughout the region.