



Winter 2003

Clean Air News

"To preserve and enhance air quality in southwest Washington"

Success Story

Way to go! TransAlta's Centralia Generation successfully completed installation and performance testing of the plant's second new sulfur dioxide scrubber. With operation of the second scrubber, TransAlta completed a \$225 million pollution control project that also included retrofitting of both boilers with low-NO_x burners. The scrubbers will reduce sulfur dioxide emissions by approximately 90 percent from past emission levels. The pollution control project was ordered by the Southwest Clean Air Agency as the result of a review of Reasonable Available Control Technology (RACT). This benefit for clean air is now in place!

Wood Stove Rebate Program

The Southwest Clean Air Agency's first Wood Stove Rebate Program has been quite successful. The \$250 rebate offered to residents of Clark, Cowlitz, Lewis, Skamania and Wahkiakum counties was good toward the purchase of an EPA certified wood stove when customers turned in their older, uncertified wood stoves for destruction and recycling. The Agency has issued 71 rebates totaling \$8,875 with funds from a grant from the Washington Department of Ecology and a matching amount has been contributed by participating local dealers. EPA certified wood stoves and fireplace inserts emit about half as much pollution as uncertified wood stoves and inserts, primarily because the new models burn wood much more efficiently. An even better way to protect winter air quality is to use a stove, insert or fireplace that burns natural gas or propane (also qualified for rebate). The Rebate Program was suspended in early October to ensure that the Agency's funding limit was not exceeded. Upon confirmation of additional funds, the Agency plans to restart the program in spring 2003.

Smoke is a Burning Issue

Wood smoke evokes pleasant memories for some and aggravates respiratory problems, such as asthma, for others. In communities across the state, residential wood smoke is a significant source of air pollution. In the wintertime when the air becomes stagnant, an inversion can occur causing smoke to stay close to its source rather than dispersing with the wind.

"Smoke from burning can be a health hazard and a nuisance, particularly in cold weather," says Bob Elliott, executive director of the Southwest Clean Air Agency. During cold or foggy weather, smoke tends to stay close to the ground, increasing pollution to unhealthy levels and making it difficult to breathe for those with respiratory ailments.

New regulations for the state of Washington in 2000 prohibited the use of burn barrels and burning garbage has been banned since 1967. Only natural vegetation grown on the property and firewood can be legally burned. **For more information about burning regulations in your area, visit www.swcleanair.org or give us a call at 1-800-633-0709.**

Efficient Burning = Cleaner Burning

To have an efficient fire and reduce your impact on your neighbors and our air quality, consider these tips:

- Burn only dry, seasoned wood or manufactured logs. The wood will dry best if pieces are between three and one half and six inches in diameter. Store the firewood in an area protected from the elements for a year, keeping it stacked in alternating directions and at least six inches off the ground. Dry wood will burn cleaner and can provide up to 44 percent more heat than unseasoned wood.
- Build small, hot fires. Use small amounts of paper and kindling to start the fire and give it plenty of air.
- Every time you add wood, step outside to check how much smoke is coming out of the chimney. If you use dry enough fuel, the right equipment, and give your fire the right amount of air, there should be no smoke visible from your chimney—only heat waves.
- Don't "bank" the stove full of wood and damper down the air supply. This wastes wood, produces excessive air pollution, increases chimney creosote build-up (which can lead to chimney fires), and produces very little heat.

Taking these simple steps with your wood heating can make a big difference to your neighborhood, your firewood expenses and your lungs.



When wintertime high-pressure settles in over the Northwest, a temperature inversion can occur, trapping smoke and other pollution near the ground.



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Southwest Clean Air Agency

Understanding Your Order of Approval

Need help understanding the fine print on your Order of Approval? We know it can be pretty dry reading, but it is important to read and understand your Order of Approval, particularly the enforceable requirements that are subject to future inspection and compliance assurance actions. An Order of Approval, or permit, contains emission limits and other conditions (such as testing, monitoring, recordkeeping and reporting requirements, etc.) for assuring compliance with the air pollution laws and standards that apply to your operation. The best time to wade in and review these requirements is when you first receive your proposed Order of Approval at the beginning of the public comment period. This 30 day period affords each permit applicant the opportunity to comment on the recommended approval conditions and requirements before we issue the permit as final. Once the permit is

issued as final there is another 30 day window during which a formal appeal process can be initiated.

Once issued, an Order of Approval will not expire as long as the facility maintains its registration current, pays its annual registration fees and makes no changes affecting emissions. Any changes to approved equipment, addition of new equipment that emits air pollutants, or any new emissions control equipment needs to be reviewed by SWCAA and may result in a revised or new permit.

If you have any questions about your permit, enforceable requirements or the inspection process, feel free to give us a call at (360) 574-3058 or 1-800-633-0709. To check on the status of your new permit or revision, visit www.swcleanair.org/PermitIntro.html.

News Briefs

► **SWCAA Welcomes Stanton and Rasmussen to the Board of Directors.** Clark County Commissioner Judie Stanton replaces Craig Pridemore who served four years, the last two years as Chair. Commissioner Stanton previously served on the SWCAA Board of Directors in 1997 and 1998 and brings more than six years of experience as a Clark County commissioner. Cowlitz County Commissioner Jeff Rasmussen, who has been serving in Cowlitz County for the last four years, replaces George Raiter who served two years on the Board of Directors at SWCAA. Thank you to Commissioners Pridemore and Raiter for all of their hard work and commitment to SWCAA!

► **Calling All Teachers!** The Southwest Clean Air Agency is sponsoring a free teacher training workshop Thursday, March 6 from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the Pearson Air Museum in Vancouver. The Clean Air Academy offers teachers a hands-on opportunity to learn about the air around us, how we use it, how we pollute it and how we can protect it. Enjoy a free lunch and learn the latest ways to teach about air quality issues and get a grade-appropriate activity guide. This workshop is approved for six Washington State Clock Hours and substitute reimbursements are paid for all licensed teachers from Clark, Cowlitz, Lewis, Skamania and Wahkiakum counties. Register by e-mailing kraten@vancouver.wsu.edu or by calling 360-546-9510.

► **Kathy Carlson** was hired last summer to serve as the Southwest Clean Air Agency's public information specialist. A former public relations assistant at Lewis & Clark College, Portland, Ore., and freelance web developer, Carlson is responsible for developing and implementing public information programs and activities for the Agency.

SOUTHWEST CLEAN AIR AGENCY

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BOARD MEETINGS

When: First Thursday of every month
Where: SWCAA offices
Contact: (360) 574-3058

CLARK COUNTY OUTDOOR BURN INFO

Contact: (360) 574-0057, ext. 6

BURN INFORMATION/OTHER COUNTIES

Contact: (800) 633-0709

NEWSLETTER

Kathy Carlson, Editor
For questions or comments regarding this newsletter, call (360) 574-3058, ext. 39 or e-mail Kathy@swcleanair.org