

NWS issues air stagnation advisory issued; woodstove use discouraged

by Bend Weekly News Sources

Stagnant air conditions over North Central Oregon, the Lower Columbia Basin in Oregon, the foothills of the Blue Mountains and the John Day Basin is prompting the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to advise against open burning and limiting use of uncertified woodstoves.

According to the National Weather Service (NWS) at Pendleton, a ridge building over Eastern Oregon today through Saturday will intensify stagnant air conditions allowing little or no mixing, keeping pollutants trapped near the surface that can steadily increase toward dangerous levels. Communities in the affected areas include Dufur, Madras, Maupin, Moro, Arlington, Boardman, Hermiston Heppner, Pendleton, John Day, Monument and Dayville.

Unless necessary, residents in the affected advisory areas should avoid using fireplaces and woodstoves (especially uncertified woodstoves), refrain from outdoor burning, and limit driving and vehicle idling.

The air stagnation advisory is in effect until 10 a.m. Saturday, January 20, 2007. However, the advisory may be extended if conditions persist. For the most up-to-date air quality advisory information, including whether this air stagnation advisory remains in effect, 24-hour weather information throughout the region, and the opportunity to speak with a forecaster, contact the NWS at 541-276-7832 or visit www.wrh.noaa.gov/pendleton. A comprehensive, area-wide, recorded NWS weather report is available at (541) 276-0103.

Local radio stations and the Weather Channel in affected advisory areas may also include the very latest air stagnation information in news programming and weather reports. Individuals in Eastern Oregon, such as Pendleton, La Grande, and Wasco County that have local advisories should check the local air quality advisory to determine the conditions for those specific areas.

"When smoke is generated from any source, such as woodstoves or open burning, the smoke,â€• according to Linda Hayes-Gorman, Air Quality Manager for Air Quality in Eastern Oregon, â€œhangs in the air under these conditions and causes health impacts to sensitive people. Refraining from burning will prevent pollution build-up and allow individuals to breathe easier.â€•

Outdoor activities for young children, pregnant women, people with asthma and other lung or heart conditions, and people over 50 should be restricted. Individuals likely to be impacted are encouraged to check with their doctor should asthma or other medical conditions be aggravated.

For more information about smoke pollution, visit the DEQ Web site at: <http://www.oregon.gov/DEQ/AQ/>.

To view the air quality index for your area visit the DEQ website at <http://www.deq.state.or.us/aqi/index.aspx>.

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