



WHO WE ARE

Eastern Panhandle Clean Air Connection is a public education and outreach program developed through the Eastern Panhandle Air Quality Task Force (Task Force) and Region 9 Planning and Development Council to help reduce air pollution in the Eastern Panhandle of West Virginia. The program was developed in response to the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) imminent designation of the Counties of Berkeley and Jefferson and the City of Martinsburg as being in non-attainment with the 8-hour ozone air quality standard. In lieu of being designated a non-attainment area, the governments of these municipalities entered into a voluntary, proactive agreement with EPA called an Early Action Compact (EAC). The purpose of the EAC is to bring the Panhandle area into attainment with the 8-hour ozone standard by 2007 through a series of a voluntary control measures implemented throughout the community.

OUR MISSION

Eastern Panhandle Clean Air Connection serves to increase public awareness of air pollution through education and outreach, as well as encourage community participation in voluntary actions that will improve air quality in the Eastern Panhandle of West Virginia.

OUR GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Ground-level ozone pollution is the primary focus of the Clean Air Connection program in 2005. Ground-level ozone is a secondary pollutant formed in the lower atmosphere when primary pollutants called volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and nitrogen oxides (NOx) react in the presence of heat and sunlight.

Upon entering into the EAC, the Task Force developed seven voluntary control measures to be implemented throughout the community that will help reduce ozone-causing emissions. These control measures include a public education and awareness campaign focusing on ground-level ozone pollution and Air Quality Action Days. The Action Days program is a nationwide effort designed to encourage people to take voluntary actions to help reduce air pollution. The campaign will target the general public of Berkeley and Jefferson Counties, as well as students and members of the business community. Other control measures include efforts to implement walking and bicycling as alternate modes of transportation to driving; a partnership with fleet managers in the ground freight industry to reduce diesel engine emissions; reduced engine idling efforts; and increased compliance with state burning regulations. The final control measure involved retrofitting school buses in Berkeley and Jefferson Counties with Diesel Oxidation Catalysts (DOCs) in an effort to reduce ozone-causing exhaust emissions by 50%. The retrofit project was completed in December 2004.

A draft of the EAC may be found online at www.cleanairconnection.org.

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