

Press Release

Contact Information:

Mike Ball, Air Quality Program Manager

Phone: 304-267-5076

Email: mball@region9wv.org

Address:

Region 9 Planning and Development Council

400 West Stephen Street, Suite 301

Martinsburg, WV 25401

Website:

www.cleanairconnection.org

Date: October 15, 2009

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: the 2009 Eastern Panhandle Ozone Season Ends With Great Results

Martinsburg, WV: The Eastern Panhandle's 2009 ozone season ended on September 30, 2009. This year's air quality for ozone pollution continued to improve from previous years, even with the EPA's more stringent standards.

In 2002, the Eastern Panhandle was in violation of the EPA's standards for ground level ozone pollution. When the EPA designated the Eastern Panhandle to be in compliance with ozone standards on April 15, 2008, they also lowered the ozone standard from 80 parts per billion (ppb) to 75 ppb. The new standards are needed to better protect the health of our citizens and the environment.

During the 2009 the Eastern Panhandle did not experience any air quality alerts. This is the first time since ozone monitoring began in the Eastern panhandle that there were no air quality alerts for the entire season. This was great progress compared to having up to six air quality alerts per season prior to establishing the local air quality program in 2004.

By reducing ozone pollution, Jefferson and Berkeley Counties are bringing sustainable health and environmental improvements to local residents.

The Region 9 Planning and Development Council would like to thank the local elected officials and staff members in Berkeley County, Jefferson County and the City of Martinsburg, the Berkeley County Development Authority, the Jefferson County Development Authority, the Air Quality Program task force, local businesses, local schools, the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection and local citizens for their support of this program. The success of this program was achieved as a group effort. As the population continues to grow in the Eastern Panhandle, the program will continue to work towards reducing air pollution in the region.