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Using Technology to Keep the Air Clean

October 5, 2009 – With cooler weather months upon us, the Yolo Solano Air Quality Management District wants to remind residents that particulate matter pollution, also known as PM 2.5, can seriously affect your health. During the months when some homes are heated by woodstoves and fireplaces, particulate matter pollution can increase. The District has a voluntary program, “Don’t Light Tonight,” to advise residents to refrain from woodburning on nights when weather conditions in combination with wood smoke can create an unhealthy environment. In order to better protect public health, this year a voluntary advisory will be issued when air quality is forecasted to reach 25 micrograms per cubic meter of air or greater, a lower threshold than last year’s 35 micrograms.

The District is encouraging residents to sign up for **Enviroflash** so they can be notified when air quality is forecast to reach unhealthy levels. “**Enviroflash** is a great tool for year round, up-to-date local air quality information as well as “Don’t Light Tonight” advisories,” said Executive Director Mat Ehrhardt, “and we encourage everyone to sign up for this free service.” Sign up at www.ysoaqmd.org and click on the **EnviroFlash** logo.

The program runs from November through February and residents will be notified one day in advance when an advisory is in effect. They will also receive alerts when events, such as smoke from wildfires, create unhealthy levels of pollution and be better informed about air quality. Residents can reduce the health impacts of woodburning in their own neighborhood by adhering to the “Don’t Light Tonight” advisories. In addition to adhering to the voluntary program, the District encourages using an EPA Phase II certified woodburning appliance if heating your home with wood. These newer appliances burn cleaner and more efficiently than an open hearth fireplace or older stoves.

The Yolo-Solano AQMD, a public health agency which serves all of Yolo County and the northeast portion of Solano County, is dedicated to protecting human health and property from the harmful effects of air pollution. For more information contact the District at 530-757-3650 or toll free at (800) 287-3650 or visit www.ysoaqmd.org.

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