



DESERT BREEZE

VOLUME XII ISSUE II

JUNE 2024

FIREWORKS SAFETY

Written By: Heather Handy, Air Quality Specialist

“What was important wasn't the fireworks, it was that we were together this evening, together in this place, looking up into the sky at the same time.” – Banana Yoshimoto

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Some may think the heart of fireworks is a desire to create the largest explosion. Others would align with the Banana Yoshimoto quote and agree that it is about the memories made with family and friends. In order to create pleasant memories for Kern County residents, all firework enthusiasts need to practice abiding by Kern County's laws and policies.

In 2023, Kern County Emergency Communications Center (ECC) received 1,267 calls for 9-1-1 on July 4th. From 9:00-10:00pm, the ECC recorded as many calls as they do in an entire day. Over the course of the Independence Day Holiday, KCFD was dispatched to 196 fires; furthermore, KCFD's online portal for Kern County residents received nearly 6,000 reports of illegal fireworks.

In anticipation of the Independence Day Holiday, please read the following reminders so that we can see a decline of calls, fires, and reports of illegal firework activity:

- No Fireworks of any kind are allowed in our mountain communities.
- Only use “Safe and Sane” fireworks. Use of fireworks other than “Safe and Sane”, modifying “Safe and Sane” fireworks, or using any type of fireworks in an unsafe manner or outside of approved dates/times is prohibited. If you engage in illegal firework activity or allow illegal firework activity to take place on your property you may be fined \$1,500 – \$2,500.
- Persons wishing to turn over illegal and/or legal fireworks may do so year-round at any KCFD Fire Station, no questions asked.
- Have a water hose, fire bucket, or fire extinguisher available and nearby to put out stray sparks.
- Know the emergency number to call for your area, your address location, and basic first aid.
- Keep persons with respiratory conditions upwind and away from the smoke.
- Have a designated adult light all fireworks.
- Use only outdoors, away from anything that can burn.

NEW STAFF INTRODUCTIONS

Gary Ray, Jr.

Air Pollution Control Officer

Gary Ray, Jr. is the new Air Pollution Control Officer for the Eastern Kern Air Pollution Control District (District) who over his twenty plus year career, has tested fluids in the oil industry; worked in the environmental services sector; and navigated air and water regulations. Gary embraces being a lifelong learner and strives for excellence.

Gary has worked at the District since 2019 as the Air Quality Administrative Manager charged with developing an annual budget (of roughly \$3 million), audits, payroll, human resources, and one of the most memorable projects he contributed to was overseeing the construction of the District's Boardroom and Tehachapi office. In his new role, he, along with his dedicated staff, are working towards bringing the District into attainment and helping the citizens of Eastern Kern to breathe a little easier.

Gary holds a bachelor's degree in chemistry and a master's degree in public administration from California State University, Bakersfield. Go **Runners!!!**

When he is not working through the complexities of air regulations, Gary can be found spending time with his wife (Lakesha) and two children (Kaleigh and Isaiah).

The District Welcomes Mr. John 'Skip' Gorman to the board of Directors

During the regular May 1, 2024, City of Ridgecrest City Council Meeting, Council Member John 'Skip' Gorman was appointed to the District's Board of Directors (replacing Mr. Kyle Blades).

Bernave Garcia

Air Quality Administrative Manager

Bernave Garcia grew up in Bakersfield and is a U.S. Army Veteran. He has a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration with a concentration in Accounting from CSU, Bakersfield.

Along with 22 years of service with the County of Kern, he also holds three designations within the finance/accounting field, including a designation as a Certified Government Finance Manager, an Enrolled Agent, and a Certified Management Accountant.

He is excited to join the District and help serve the citizens and public of the Eastern Kern region. Bernave joins the District as the Air Quality Administrative Manager.

Victoria Martinez

Air Quality Support Specialist

Victoria Martinez is a Bakersfield native, Victoria attended BC and CSUB, and has been a County of Kern employee for over 11 years at various departments.

Victoria joins the District as an Air Quality Support Specialist and is happy to contribute her part towards improving air quality for the District.

Cristina Bolton

Air Quality Support Specialist

Cristina Bolton was born in Bakersfield California and raised in Delano California. Cristina is currently attending Bakersfield College, majoring in Business Administration.

Cristina has served the County of Kern for 9 years, She joins the District as an Air Quality Support Specialist. When she is not working or busy with school work, she enjoys playing video games, and hanging out with her husband and two cats.

What air pollutants do landfills emit?

Written by: Samuel Johnson, Air Quality Engineer



Air pollution is created at landfills from two main sources: dust from vehicles and equipment operating at the landfill, and gases formed by the breakdown of waste within the landfill, some of which are harmful. Dust particles with a diameter smaller than 10 microns (roughly 1/5 the diameter of a human hair; referred to as PM10) can get deep into the respiratory system and can cause numerous health issues.

Organic waste (such as food, paper, plasterboard...) will break down over time after being buried in the landfill. In the presence of air, moisture, and microorganisms within the cover soil and fill, biodegradable waste will decompose, transforming into a variety of gases, commonly referred to as landfill gas (LFG). These gases are mostly methane and carbon dioxide, but also contain non-methane organic compounds (NMOC), and hydrogen sulfide (H₂S). A large portion of NMOC is also considered volatile organic compounds (VOC), meaning they will photochemically react (i.e. react in sunlight) to form other molecules, including ozone, which can damage the airways of humans and aggravate lung diseases. Additionally, waste buried in the landfill can ignite as a result of heat formed during the decomposition process, which can form additional hazardous gases and PM10.

H₂S and some NMOC, such as benzene, formaldehyde, and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAH), are classified as hazardous air pollutants (HAP). These HAP cause a variety of short term (acute), long term (chronic), and cancer (carcinogenic) health impacts in humans.

Landfills are regularly monitored along the surface with devices designed to detect gas leaks. Landfills also use a landfill gas collection system, which is a series of perforated pipes under the surface of the landfill that collects the LFG and routes it to a device that captures or destroys the LFG.

Board of Directors

Michael Davies, Chairman (Councilman, Tehachapi)
Zack Scrivner, Vice-Chair (KC 2nd District Supervisor)
Phillip Peters (KC 1st District Supervisor)
John 'Skip' Gorman (Councilman, Ridgecrest)
Jim Creighton (Councilman, California City)

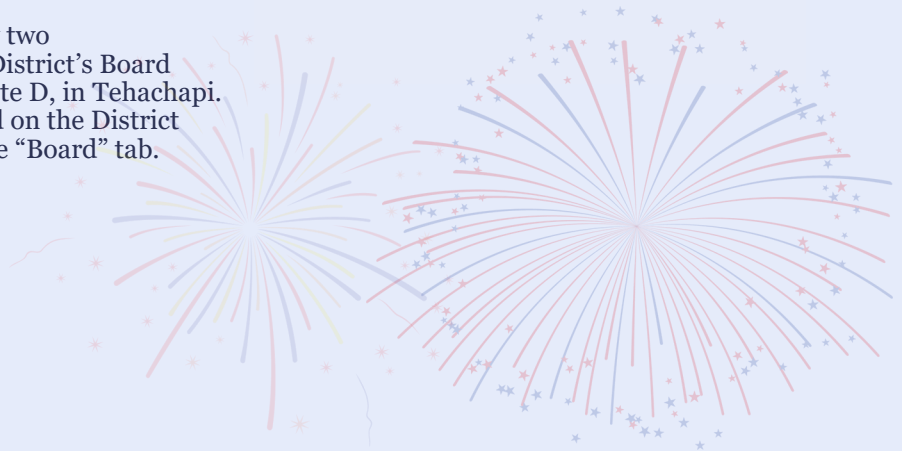
Board of Directors meet once every two months starting in January at the District's Board Room, 414 W. Tehachapi Blvd., Suite D, in Tehachapi. The Meeting Agenda can be located on the District website www.kernair.org, under the "Board" tab.

Air Pollution Control Officer

Gary Ray, Jr.

Hearing Board Members

Doris Lora
Chris Ellis
Benjamin Dewell
Brett Moseley



For news updates and other information, please visit the Eastern Kern APCD website at www.kernair.org

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