



Bill Richardson  
Governor

**NEW MEXICO  
ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT**

*Office of the Secretary*

Harold Runnels Building  
1190 Saint Francis Drive (87505)  
PO Box 26110, Santa Fe, NM 87502  
Phone (505) 827-2855 Fax (505) 827-2836  
[www.nmenv.state.nm.us](http://www.nmenv.state.nm.us)



Ron Curry  
Secretary  
Jon Goldstein  
Deputy Secretary

April 29, 2009  
For Immediate Release

Contact: Marissa Stone, NMED Communications Director  
Telephone: (505) 827-0314 or (505) 231-0475

**American Lung Association Report Ranks Espanola and Santa Fe among Top 17  
Cleanest Cities in the Nation**

*Air Quality in New Mexico's Counties, Cities among best in U.S.*

(Santa Fe, N.M.) A new report by the American Lung Association that rates air quality in cities and counties across the nation ranks Espanola and Santa Fe among the 17 cleanest cities in the country overall. Farmington stood among the cleanest cities list for short and long-term particulate matter and Albuquerque rates as one of the cleanest cities for long-term particle pollution.

The report shows New Mexico's air is among the cleanest in the country.

Espanola and Santa Fe have the lowest levels of annual PM 2.5 air pollution, which are particles that are less than 2.5 microns in diameter. Particulate matter of that size is considered the most hazardous to public health because it can be inhaled into the lungs easily and creates respiratory problems.

"We are proud that New Mexicans can live in some of the cleanest cities and counties in the nation," said New Mexico Environment Department Secretary Ron Curry. "The report reflects our state is on the right track but we will continue to improve our air quality by pursuing efforts to reduce pollution from major sources."

The association releases an annual report ranking cities and counties based on ozone and PM2.5 air pollution levels measured across the country. New Mexico's cities and counties were not listed among the lists of most polluted areas.

Chaves, Grant, Lea, San Juan and Santa Fe counties ranked among the top cleanest counties for short-term or 24-hour particle pollution. Air quality monitors in those cities reported no days with unhealthy PM2.5 levels. Chaves County was also at the top of the list with cities that had the smallest amount of long-term particle pollution. Grant County ranked among the cleanest counties for ozone pollution. That list represented counties with no monitored ozone air pollution in unhealthy ranges using National Ambient Air Quality Standards.

Santa Fe, San Juan and Chaves counties ranked among the cleanest for ozone and particle pollution, which are the most widespread air pollutants with the most significant impacts to public health and the environment.

Particulate pollution, like that coming from vehicle exhaust smoke, refers to a mixture of miniscule solid and liquid particles found in the air we breathe, the report states. Ozone is formed by chemical reactions in the atmosphere from two raw gases from of tailpipes, smokestacks and many other sources. Ozone is composed of nitrogen oxides (NOx) and hydrocarbons, referred to as volatile organic compounds (VOCs).

The association measured air quality, including smog, soot and annual levels of particle pollution, based on reports submitted by states to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The report, called State of The Air 2009, can be seen at ([www.stateoftheair.org/](http://www.stateoftheair.org/)).

For more information, call Marissa Stone at (505) 827-0314 or (505) 231-0475.

###