



SUSANA MARTINEZ, GOVERNOR

Ryan Flynn, *Cabinet Secretary*

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NEWS RELEASE

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Environment Department Celebrates National Air Quality Awareness Week

Everyday Steps Can Reduce Air Pollution In Your Community

Santa Fe – National Air Quality Awareness Week, April 28 through May 2, 2014, focuses on improving and protecting the air we all breathe. The New Mexico Environment Department works year-round to improve New Mexico’s air quality to protect both public health and the environment. Air quality affects our health, as well as the health of our families and neighbors. It also impacts the health of the environment and the overall quality of life in our communities.

The purpose of the New Mexico Environment Department air quality program is to safeguard public health and the environment by preventing and reducing air pollution. The Environment Department and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency use regulatory tools to address pollution. These tools include national and state laws that limit emissions from industrial plants, motor vehicles and other sources of air pollutants.

“The mission of the New Mexico Environment Department is to protect and restore the environment, and to foster a healthy and prosperous New Mexico for present and future generations. This mission goes beyond state regulations and programs. All of us, as individuals, can make choices that help improve and protect the quality of the air we breathe,” said Ryan Flynn, Cabinet Secretary of the New Mexico Environment Department.

The main sources of air pollution in New Mexico – industrial emissions, smoke from outdoor burning, including wildfires and high wind dust storms – share a common denominator: tiny fine particles that can be easily inhaled deeply into lungs, where they can cause heart and breathing problems, and even death. Children, people with asthma and respiratory illnesses, and adults over age 65 are most at risk.

Here are some everyday steps that you can take to help reduce air pollution in your community:

- Drive less. Combine errands.
- Use public transportation.
- Minimize use of gasoline to lawnmowers or other small engines that emit air pollutants.
- Delay ground disturbing activities during high wind events.
- Don't burn trash. Burning anything other than clean wood waste is illegal in New Mexico except for on tribal lands, which are not regulated by the New Mexico Environment Department.
- Chip or compost yard waste rather than burning it.

For more information about National Air Quality Awareness Week, please visit <http://www.epa.gov/airnow/airaware/>.

For more information, please contact Jim Winchester, NMED Communications Director at (505) 231-8800 or the Air Quality Bureau at (505) 476-4300.

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