DEQ plans for the 2014 winter ozone season

Forecasting January-March for the Upper Green River Basin

December 19, 2013

The Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), Air Quality Division (AQD), is again reaching out to residents of the Upper Green River Basin in anticipation of elevated ozone levels. Elevated levels of ozone have been observed in previous years during the months of February and March.

Ozone adversely affects the respiratory system, especially in children, the elderly and people with existing respiratory conditions. On days when elevated ozone levels are expected, people in these sensitive groups should limit strenuous or extended outdoor activities, primarily in the afternoon and evening. The public is encouraged to use the monitored data to help make decisions about outdoor activity. More information on ozone and the health effects of ozone is available at the Wyoming Department of Health website, http://www.health.wyo.gov.

In preparation for the winter of 2014 and the possibility of elevated ozone occurring in the Upper Green River Basin, the AQD is again initiating in-house weather forecasting. Forecasting by the AQD's meteorologists will consist of evaluating whether a strong temperature inversion in conjunction with low winds, snow cover and clear skies is likely to occur. This is the combination of factors which, together with the presence of ozone forming emissions, appear to result in elevated ozone levels.

The AQD will continue to forecast for the winter of 2014 (January - March) and provide updates to the public daily. These winter ozone updates will give expected conditions for the current and next two days. The winter ozone updates will be geared specifically toward making sure the public has the information needed to help make decisions about outdoor activity.

These winter ozone updates will be conveyed in several ways to the public. Beginning January 2, the main page of DEQ's website, http://deq.state.wy.us, and the AQD's Winter Ozone website, http://winterozone.org, will carry a daily message of current and next two days conditions. The public can also sign up at the Winter Ozone website to receive daily winter ozone updates by email. Next, DEQ will notify all media outlets in Sublette County of the current winter ozone update. Media outlets include Sublette County newspapers, radio stations, and online news sources. KPIN radio will broadcast a winter ozone update everyday at noon. Also, citizens may call 1-888-WYO-WDEQ (1-888-996-9337) to hear a recorded message (updated by noon every day) regarding the forecasted conditions that may impact ozone concentrations, typically during the latter half of the day.

The AQD will continue the short-term emission reduction ozone contingency plan program with all stakeholders (e.g., oil and gas industry, non-oil and gas industry, governmental agencies) in the Upper Green River Basin ozone nonattainment area of southwest Wyoming. Ozone contingency plan participants have volunteered to take short-term actions to further reduce emissions in response to forecasted conditions that favor possible elevated ozone levels. These contingency plans will be implemented on Ozone Action Days. The Action Days will be issued by AQD 24-hours in advance when forecasting indicates that weather conditions would be conducive to the development of elevated ozone levels for the next day.

On Ozone Action Days, everyone – including those without ozone contingency plans and the public, are encouraged to voluntarily reduce emissions. Such actions may include, but are not

limited to, eliminating vehicle idling and postponing nonessential trips.

The AQD operates several monitoring stations in the Upper Green River Basin. Real-time monitored data, including current ozone levels being measured at these stations, can be found at www.wyvisnet.com. The public is encouraged to use the monitored data to help make decisions about outdoor activity.

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