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### **Air Quality Reminder: Avoid Using Woodstoves and Fireplaces**

Due to the prolonged air stagnation advisory in the Willamette Valley, LRAPA is asking residents to be especially careful when using woodstoves and fireplaces this weekend, and avoid using them entirely, if at all possible.

“Under current weather conditions, pollution levels tend to rise more over the weekends, when people are at home using their woodstoves. We’re asking that people be very sensitive to the fact that many individuals are experiencing adverse health affects caused by the increased levels of air pollution,” said Kim Metzler, of LRAPA. Populations most susceptible to adverse health effects from pollution are the elderly, people with respiratory, lung or heart problems, people with asthma or allergies, those with diabetes, and pregnant women and children.

“It’s these sensitive individuals we are trying to protect,” said Metzler. “They are affected at much lower levels than the general public. We’re receiving calls daily from individuals who are experiencing respiratory problems because of the levels.”

Air quality in the Eugene/Springfield area began to deteriorate December 8th, with levels considered unhealthy for sensitive groups of people during the past weekend. “We expect to see that happen again this weekend if people continue to use their woodstoves and fireplaces,” Metzler said. A yellow home wood heating advisory has been in effect for the Eugene/Springfield metropolitan area since December 9th.

The Oakridge area has seen a sharp rise in air pollution over the last couple of days as well. As a result, a yellow home wood heating advisory was called for Oakridge residents last night.

The advisories will be updated early this afternoon for tonight and tomorrow. During a yellow advisory, residents are asked to avoid burning if possible, and to burn extremely cleanly if they do burn by burning only dry wood, burning small, hot fires, and leaving the damper wide open.

Air quality deteriorates when stagnant air settles over the valley, trapping air pollutants at ground-level. Over several days time, the pollutants become more concentrated, resulting in higher than average levels of pollution. The current conditions expect to remain until a weather front moves into the valley.

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