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**Contact:** Sally Markos, 736-1056 ext. 217  
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### **Home Wood Heating season begins November 1, residents asked to follow advisories**

Lane County's mandatory home wood heating season officially starts on November 1 and residents are being encouraged to follow the daily advisories issued by Lane Regional Air Protection Agency (LRAPA). "Our air quality tends to deteriorate in the winter months when we have air inversions and stagnant weather patterns - those times without much wind or rain," said Sally Markos, LRAPA spokesperson. "Smoke from wood stoves and fireplaces quickly builds up on the valley floor, especially when fires are allowed to smolder, or when wood stoves are damped down." According to LRAPA's emission inventory, residential home wood heating smoke is the major source of all particulates emitted in Lane County, especially on cold winter days.

Last winter, Eugene/Springfield experienced the first red advisory day in history when pollution, primarily from wood smoke, reached the unhealthy level on January 24, 2008. Cold temperatures and calm wind over previous days caused pollution to build up and worsen. The community will likely see more yellow and possibly red advisories compared to previous years because of tightened federal standards for fine particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>), a major component of wood smoke. "Following the advisories is more important now than ever," said Markos. "If residents can use another source of heat rather than wood during days when a yellow advisory is called, we may be able to avoid red days and violations of the federal clean air standard."

Fine particulates, a component of wood smoke, are smaller than the diameter of a human hair and lodge deep into the lungs. Wood heating smoke also contains hazardous chemical components. Scientific studies demonstrate that wood smoke can severely impact individuals, especially those with heart or lung problems, allergies, and asthma. Older adults, pregnant women, and children are most vulnerable.

The home wood heating season is in affect from November 1 through the end of February within the Eugene/Springfield Urban Growth Boundary including both cities, and the City of Oakridge. The program is in place to help keep air pollution from woodstoves and fireplaces to a minimum. Both the Eugene/Springfield area and Oakridge have wintertime air quality problems related to wood burning. Last season, Oakridge experienced five red advisory days.

(More)

### ***How the program works***

During the four-month season, LRAPA issues daily advisories to inform residents if burning in their woodstoves and fireplaces is allowed. A simple “red, yellow, green” advisory system informs residents of the daily advisory. A “green” advisory is called when air quality is good and burning is allowed; a “yellow” advisory is called when air quality is deteriorating and burning is cautioned against; and a “red” advisory is called when air quality is approaching unhealthy levels for sensitive groups. During a red advisory, no visible chimney smoke is allowed. Burning on a red day can result in a fine of up to \$500. Residents can expect to see LRAPA staff present in the community on red advisory days when visible emissions are not allowed.

Daily burning advisories are provided to the public through a number of outlets, including the LRAPA Home Wood Heating Advisory Line at 746-HEAT (746-4328), the agency’s web site at [www.lrapa.org](http://www.lrapa.org), local radio and television stations, and the Register Guard newspaper’s weather page.

### ***Burn clean to minimize smoke***

“To help minimize smoke we ask people to burn only clean, dry firewood. Burning wet wood provides little heat while producing a lot of excess smoke,” Markos said. If people use manufactured firelogs, LRAPA encourages the use of products that use cleaner, less odorous binders, such as the “All Natural Firelog” by Duraflame, which contains no petroleum products and emits very little smoke. LRAPA also reminds residents NOT to “damp down” their stoves, which causes incomplete combustion and excess smoke.

Residents are reminded that burning waste paper, plastic and other trash in woodstoves or fireplaces causes excessive smoke and harmful pollution, is illegal, and may result in a \$500 fine.

Program exemptions are available for residents who meet low-income energy assistance guidelines for Lane County. In addition, Oakridge residents may apply for exemptions if their homes are heated solely with wood. Eugene/Springfield area residents should contact LRAPA (736-1056) for an exemption; Oakridge residents need to contact Oakridge City Hall (782-2258).

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