LRAPA
Lane Regional Air Protection Agency

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Open Burning Season Opens Tuesday, October 4

After a three day delay due to dry weather conditions, the open burning season opens tomorrow, October 4, for most residents in Lane County. However, the Lane Regional Air Protection Agency (LRAPA) would like to remind residents that burning is prohibited year-round within the city limits of Eugene, and is greatly restricted for residents of Springfield.

"Generally, most residents who live outside the Urban Growth Boundary of Eugene and Springfield are allowed to burn under LRAPA rules," said Sally Markos, of LRAPA. "However, some cities, such as Oakridge and the City of Florence, have enacted ordinances that further restrict burning." Like Eugene, Florence bans burning year-round inside the city limits. Residents should always check local ordinances before burning.

LRAPA also recommends residents call their local fire departments for information regarding restrictions on burning in their areas before they burn. Burning is restricted on days when pollution rises into the moderate category or weather conditions may cause a build up of fine particulate from smoke. Willamette Valley residents should always call LRAPA's open burning hotline, 541-726-3976, before burning to verify that burning is allowed on any given day. Coastal residents can call 541-997-1757 for daily outdoor burning advisories. The advisories also have information about what time burning may begin and when fires must be out. The advisories are updated daily on the agency website, LRAPA.org.

Residents who are allowed to burn are reminded that burning only woody yard debris generated on their own residential property is allowed, and that all fires must be out by sunset. Burning trash and garbage is illegal and can result in stiff fines. A first offense violation of LRAPA's open burning rules may result in a $500 fine.

"LRAPA wants to remind residents that although burning might be allowed in their area, smoke from open burning exposes individuals to harmful pollutants, including particulates and air toxics. Smoke can travel quite a distance and impact large areas. The agency asks residents to dispose of debris by composting, chipping, or recycling whenever possible to avoid exposing themselves and others to harmful emissions," Markos said.

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Backyard burning generates the largest number of complaints received by LRAPA. Complaints reported to LRAPA about open burning have climbed in the last few years and the agency has levied numerous fines for illegal burning. “People are becoming more aware of the health impacts from smoke and are less tolerant of open burning, even during the burning season. It’s a serious health concern for many people, especially when illegal materials are thrown into the fire.” Markos said.

Residents can dispose of yard debris for a minimal charge at several collection depots, including Lane County transfer sites at Glenwood, Cottage Grove and Florence, Lane Forest Products (541-345-9085), and Rexius (541-342-1835).

Things residents can do to reduce impacts from open burning:

* Keep piles covered and dry until ready to burn;
* Burn only wood debris;
* Use a chipper whenever possible, and burn only what is necessary; and
* Burn well within the property line away from other homes.

Likewise, the Department of Forestry reminds residents to follow safety precautions to prevent back-yard burn piles from escaping into wildfires. Residents are asked to:

* Clear a trail around the burn pile down to mineral soil;
* Keep a shovel and a supply of water handy at the site; and
* Constantly attend the burn site until the fire is completely extinguished.

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