



## **Regional Partners Launch Ozone Season Campaign: Be Air Aware**

Individuals, businesses, local governments encouraged to adopt  
focused strategies for air pollution watches, warnings

**May 4, 2012** (Arlington, Texas) – As national Air Quality Awareness Week comes to a close, a North Texas effort to protect health, incite action and improve air quality is launching.

To energize efforts to improve air quality, Air North Texas partners are challenging North Texans, businesses and local governments to Be Air Aware and commit to focused strategies on air pollution watch and warning days.

From big to small efforts, the common goal is awareness which leads to action – awareness of the current air quality to protect health and awareness of strategies which reduce ozone-causing pollution. At [www.airnorthtexas.org](http://www.airnorthtexas.org) individuals, business and local governments can learn about and commit to implementing focused strategies to reduce ozone-causing pollution on days with air pollution watches. The website also includes information about the air quality index and limiting outdoor activity to protect health when an air pollution warning is issued.

### **Strategies for individuals**

Carpooling, riding mass transit, bicycling, walking, working from home when possible, using technology such as teleconferencing or video conferencing to minimize travel to meetings, packing a lunch instead of going out, conserving water to conserve electricity, postponing mowing to a day without an air pollution watch or warning and more.

### **Strategies for businesses**

Allowing employees to work from home, limiting testing of emergency generators, conserving electricity, communicating air pollution watches and warnings and clean air choices to employees, coordinating on-site employee lunches, offering incentives to encourage employees to carpool or ride transit, reducing travel during rush hour, driving the most fuel-efficient vehicle when a trip is necessary, avoiding idling of on-road vehicles and non-road equipment (including construction equipment) and more.

### **Strategies for local governments**

Minimizing roadway maintenance and limiting lane closures, instituting freeway incident management practices, enforcing idling restrictions, enforcing emissions inspection compliance, using natural lighting to conserve electricity, communicating air pollution watch and warnings and clean air choices to employees and the public, encouraging water conservation to save electricity, avoiding idling of on-road vehicles and non-road equipment (including construction equipment) and more.

After several years of steady improvement, last summer North Texas faced one of the toughest ozone seasons in recent years. Improving air quality is the responsibility of everyone, from the 6.5 million residents to the businesses employing them and the governments making decisions every day. Air quality impacts every North Texan, and it will take the entire region working together to continue to improve it.

With new transit and bicycle/pedestrian projects complete; sustainable, mixed-use developments open; a regional ride-matching option online at [www.tryparkingit.com](http://www.tryparkingit.com); and more alternative-fuel vehicles on the market; it's easier than ever to do something for clean air.

Twenty partners, including local governments, transportation partners and others, are involved with Air North Texas, a regional clean air public awareness initiative.

The Environmental Protection Agency recently announced Wise County would be added to the nine counties of Collin, Dallas, Denton, Ellis, Johnson, Kaufman, Parker, Rockwall and Tarrant which are classified as nonattainment for eight-hour ozone levels.

Meeting the federal air quality standard is important for the health and quality of life of residents. High ozone levels can make it more difficult to breathe deeply, cause shortness of breath and pain when taking a deep breath, or cause coughing and a sore or scratchy throat. Breathing ozone-polluted air also aggravates lung diseases such as asthma, emphysema and chronic bronchitis. Children, elderly and people with these conditions are more sensitive to ozone, but even healthy adults can be affected.

The region is making progress in improving air quality, but much more work must be done to reduce ozone levels, protect the health of North Texans and preserve the economic vitality of the region. Improving North Texas' air quality requires action from the public and private sectors and residents.

Therefore, as the region approaches the height of ozone season, it is important to Be Air Aware.

**About the North Central Texas Council of Governments:**

NCTCOG is a voluntary association of local governments established in 1966 to assist local governments in planning for common needs, cooperating for mutual benefit and coordinating for sound regional development. NCTCOG's purpose is to strengthen both the individual and collective power of local governments and to help them recognize regional opportunities, eliminate unnecessary duplication and make joint decisions.

NCTCOG serves a 16-county region of North Central Texas, which is centered on the two urban centers of Dallas and Fort Worth. Currently, NCTCOG has 240 member governments including 16 counties, 170 cities, 24 school districts and 30 special districts.

**About Air North Texas:**

Air North Texas is a regional air quality partnership and general public outreach effort. Air North Texas leverages existing resources and program strengths to offer the public a comprehensive resource for air quality information. Collaborative efforts focus on reducing harmful emissions, protecting public health and welfare, motivating residents to make choices that improve air quality and preserving the economic vitality in the region. Visit [www.airnorthtexas.org](http://www.airnorthtexas.org) to learn more.

###