

PRESSRELEASE

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For Immediate Release

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Partners For Clean Air

Michigan City, IN (June 14, 2004) – Michigan City is a member of the Partners For Clean Air, a voluntary membership organization sponsored by the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) and composed of governments, industry, and businesses committed to clean air.

The Common Council passed a resolution, introduced by Patricia Boy and Paul Przybylinski and signed by Mayor Chuck Oberlie, in March 2004 resolving that Michigan City will participate in the Partners For Clean Air program. The resolution states “the quality of the air impacts the lifestyle of citizens and impacts the economic vitality of a city.”

Members of the Partners for Clean Air Program develop Ozone Action Plans. These plans are designed to be implemented on Ozone Action Days as a way of reducing ozone contributing pollutants.

Ozone Action Days are days in which ground level ozone is predicted to reach unhealthy levels. IDEM and Illinois EPA employ a team of forecasters who analyze weather patterns and ozone concentrations and determine if ground level ozone may reach unhealthy levels.

Mayor Oberlie said, “The quality of our air is an important issue for everyone who lives, works, and plays in Michigan City. Ozone is one of six key components which scientists have identified as being particularly harmful to humans and to the environment. Motor vehicle exhaust, industrial emissions, fuel vapors, and chemical solvents are some of the sources of ozone components. Sunlight and hot weather cause ground-level ozone to form in harmful concentrations in the air. As a result, ozone is known as a summertime air pollutant. Indiana’s ozone season is May 1st to September 30th.”

Mayor Oberlie’s initial action plan for Ozone Action Days includes the following:

- The installation of vapor recovery hoses at city-owned fueling stations;
- The use of bio-diesel and gasoline fuels in the summer months;
- The continuing efforts of the city’s Tree Board to plant more trees throughout the city.

On designated Ozone Action Days, the following additional actions will be implemented:

- Waiving bus fares on the fixed route bus system, encouraging citizens and visitors to utilize our mass transit system rather than putting more vehicles on the road;
- Fueling municipally-owned equipment and vehicles after 7:00 p.m. and before 7:00 a.m.;
- Minimizing the use of solvents, oil-based paints and similar products;
- Utilizing alternative work schedules for outdoor personnel;
- Turning off engines when vehicles are not in use;
- Installing bike racks on the municipal coaches and central work sites (Central Services, City Hall, etc.);
- Displaying an Ozone Alert flag at central work sites; and
- Alerting the local media, notifying them that the City has declared an Ozone Action Day.

IDEM's website (<http://www.in.gov/idem/air/partners/>) offers tips for employers and for citizens that will help clean the air which we all breathe. Regarding your car, you can...

- reduce time driving, especially during peak traffic periods or hot days.
- carpool, use public transportation, walk, ride a bike.
- combine your errands into one trip and park centrally, walking as much as possible.
- choose your route before you leave to avoid traffic tie-ups.
- limit engine idling time to not more than 30 seconds.
- accelerate gradually, maintain speed limit, and use cruise control on the highway.
- avoid waiting in long drive-through lines.
- keep your vehicle well maintained.
- use an energy-conserving grade of motor oil.
- change air and oil filters regularly.
- keep tires properly inflated and aligned.
- repair all vehicle leaks.
- make an appointment with a repair tech if "check engine light" is illuminated.
- ask if used materials are recycled before having vehicle serviced and, if not, consider going to an environmentally friendly shop.
- minimize use of vehicle's air conditioning.
- use EPA-certified facilities for air conditioner repair.
- fill gas tank during cooler evening hours to reduce evaporation.
- avoid spilling gas and don't "top off" the tank.
- replace gas tank cap tightly.

At home you can...

- use energy-efficient lighting and appliances.
- contact your local electric utility to see if "green power" is available.
- turn off appliances and lights when not in use.
- use the microwave to cook small meals.
- plant deciduous trees to provide shade in the summer and to allow light in the winter.
- recycle paper, plastic, glass bottles, aluminum cans and cardboard.
- reuse materials like paper bags and boxes.
- keep household paints, solvents and pesticides in air-tight containers.
- paint with a brush, not a sprayer.
- keep woodstoves and fireplaces well maintained.
- keep air conditioning and refrigeration systems well maintained.
- reduce air conditioning and heating use when possible.
- check filters monthly to ensure cleaner air.
- insulate your home, water heater and pipes.

At work you can...

- buy energy-efficient computers and lighting.
- turn off all equipment and lights when not in use.
- pack a lunch and eat in or walk to lunch.
- take the stairs instead of the elevator.
- work a flexible schedule and commute during non-peak driving times.
- telecommute, if feasible.
- take advantage of any ride-share or carpooling programs.
- keep fleet vehicles well maintained.
- adopt office-wide pollution prevention methods.
- recycle office products.
- buy new products that have less packaging and are reusable

Mayor Oberlie concluded, "We should all be concerned about our breathing air because ozone can trigger a variety of health problems which are particularly dangerous for the very young, the elderly and those with chronic illnesses. Ozone can irritate lung airways and cause inflammation, and it can damage our trees and other plants...including the crops which provide our food. The City of Michigan City is committed to doing all we can to improve our air quality, and I ask that each of our citizens join in these efforts. We will all benefit from these changes to our daily behavior."

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