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NEWS RELEASE

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Tooele and Box Elder added to forecasts

Summer signals start of Ozone Alerts

Salt Lake City, Utah – The Utah Division of Air Quality has expanded its pollution forecasts to include Tooele and Box Elder counties just in time to alert people of summer smog.

“With the growing population of Box Elder and Tooele counties, it’s important to include them in our 3-day forecasts,” said Cheryl Heying, director of Air Quality. “Ozone is the pollutant of concern during the summer, making it unpleasant and even unhealthy at times so the ‘Choose Clean Air’ alerts are crucial to inform folks along the Wasatch Front when ozone levels are building so they can make choices to prevent the pollution from getting worse.”

Ozone is formed when vehicle emissions and industrial sources mix with sunlight and heat. Ozone pollution becomes more troublesome on hot summer days and can make it difficult for people to breathe. Prolonged exposure can also lead to lung damage.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s 24-hour standard for ozone is 75 parts per billion.

“It’s important for people to check the pollution levels on our Web site before they drive to work each morning because certain weather conditions, mixed with vehicle exhaust, can cause ozone to rise. When that happens we ask people to limit their driving,” said Bo Call, manager of the Air Monitoring Center.

Click on www.airquality.utah.gov to find a color-coded three-day forecast for Salt Lake, Davis, Cache, Weber and Utah counties. “Green” means air quality is good and people are encouraged to make clean air choices to keep the air healthy. “Yellow” means the pollution is building and people are asked to take proactive steps by taking mass transit, carpooling, consolidating vehicle trips, and avoiding idling or using a gas-powered lawn mower in the middle of the day. “Red” means pollution levels are critically high, and residents should avoid using gasoline and diesel-powered engines.

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