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NEWS RELEASE

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Fireworks and Wildfires Impact Utah's Summer Air Quality

SALT LAKE CITY — While fireworks are a significant part of celebrating Independence Day, the Utah Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) reminds Utah residents that firework smoke can impact air quality during the upcoming holiday weekend.

Normally a wintertime issue, particulate matter (PM) air pollution is present during the summer months when smoke from fireworks and wildfires is prevalent—an unwelcome addition to the summertime ozone pollution. DEQ's Division of Air Quality (DAQ) has monitored extremely high concentrations of both PM10 and PM2.5 (the fine and the very fine fractions of PM) associated with wildfires, and both large, community aerial displays and small, private neighborhood fireworks.

“Every year we see significant spikes in particulate matter concentrations on July 4th,” said Bryce Bird, director of DAQ. “These spikes are mostly related to the smaller, neighborhood fireworks and barbeques. Exceptional events like wildfires and fireworks on holidays can make our air quality much worse—a fact that we hope people will take into consideration when planning their holiday parties.”

For example, last year DAQ monitors recorded short-term 1 hour average concentrations as high as 157 micrograms of particles per cubic meter of air in the Salt Lake Valley. The 24-hour standard for PM2.5 is 35 micrograms per cubic meter.

Those most affected by the particulate matter pollution are children, the elderly and sensitive individuals with respiratory conditions. DAQ recommends that those individuals who might find these celebrations more troublesome than fun avoid such areas directly, or at least view them from a safe distance. It is also recommended that those who are particularly sensitive stay indoors (especially during the evening) and close the windows, so that indoor air is not affected.

To help residents plan ahead and adjust their activities during periods of high pollution, DAQ provides hourly air quality monitoring through its UtahAir app (available for free download in both the Apple and Android apps stores), website (www.airquality.utah.gov), toll-free messages (1-800-228-5434), and regular email alerts (www.deq.utah.gov/NewsNotices).

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About DEQ

Established in 1991, the Utah Department of Environmental Quality's (DEQ) mission is to safeguard public health and quality of life by protecting and enhancing the environment. DEQ implements state and federal environmental laws and works with individuals, community groups and businesses to protect the quality of Utah's air, land and

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