



A Century of Service Centennial

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HISTORY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AIR QUALITY

CLARK COUNTY HAS BECOME A BUSTLING METROPOLIS FILLED WITH NEARLY 2 MILLION PEOPLE OVER THE LAST DECADE. OVER THE YEARS WITH THE ONSLAUGHT OF RAPID GROWTH, THE VALLEY'S ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES HAVE BECOME MORE FRAGILE THROUGH THE EXPANSION OF ACTIVITIES LIKE CONSTRUCTION, TRAFFIC, AND RECREATION IN THE DESERT. TO ADDRESS SUSTAINABILITY, THE CLARK COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF AIR QUALITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT'S (DAQEM) SOLE MISSION IS TO "... DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT HIGH-QUALITY, EFFECTIVE LOCAL PROGRAMS TO FULFILL AIR QUALITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS AND ADDRESS COMMUNITY CONCERNS, THEREBY PROTECTING THE REGION'S QUALITY OF LIFE WHILE FACILITATING ORDERLY GROWTH."

IN 2001 THE CLARK COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF AIR QUALITY WAS FORMED AND GIVEN THE AUTHORITY TO PROVIDE DIRECTION AND OVERSIGHT FOR COUNTY AIR QUALITY ACTIVITIES. IN 2004 ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES WERE ADDED AND THE DEPARTMENT OF AIR QUALITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT (DAQEM) WAS CREATED. DAQEM MAKES SURE THE COUNTY COMPLIES WITH THE FEDERAL, STATE AND LOCAL REQUIREMENTS RELATED TO AIR QUALITY, WATER QUALITY AND SPECIES HABITAT PROTECTION.

DAQEM HAS BEEN DELEGATED THE AUTHORITY, UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF NEVADA REVISED STATUTE 445B.500 AND BY DIRECTION OF THE CLARK COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, TO IMPLEMENT AND ENFORCE AN AIR POLLUTION CONTROL PROGRAM IN CLARK COUNTY, NEVADA. DAQEM APPLIES AND ENFORCES THE AIR QUALITY

REGULATIONS, WHICH ESTABLISH REQUIREMENTS FOR SOURCES THAT EMIT OR RELEASE AIR CONTAMINANTS INTO THE ATMOSPHERE. THROUGH THE CLEAN AIR ACT AND THE UNDER THE AUSPICES OF EPA GUIDELINES, THE DEPARTMENT MONITORS, REGULATES, EDUCATES, AND CONDUCTS LONG-TERM PLANNING FOR AIR QUALITY IN THE VALLEY.

THE DEPARTMENT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ENSURING COMPLIANCE WITH THE MANDATES TO REDUCE POLLUTION SET FORTH BY THE FEDERAL CLEAN AIR ACT OF 1970 AND ITS AMENDMENTS THAT ESTABLISHED NEW GOALS TO CONSIDER ADDITIONAL POLLUTANTS AS THEY POSE SIGNIFICANT HEALTH HAZARDS. CARBON MONOXIDE, PARTICULATE MATTER (DUST) AND GROUND-LEVEL OZONE HAVE BEEN THE POLLUTANTS OF CONCERN IN THE COUNTY.

IN 1985, THE VALLEY LOGGED A RECORD 41 UNHEALTHY AIR DAYS DUE TO CARBON MONOXIDE. HOWEVER, SINCE 1998 CLARK COUNTY HAS NOT LOGGED A SINGLE VIOLATION OF CARBON MONOXIDE STANDARDS SET BY THE U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA). DAQEM DEVELOPED A MAINTENANCE PLAN FOR DEALING WITH CARBON MONOXIDE, A STEP THAT HAS LEAD TO THE VALLEY BEING REMOVED FROM THE EPA'S NONATTAINMENT LIST FOR THAT POLLUTANT. THE EPA OFFICIALLY RECOGNIZED CLARK COUNTY HAD ATTAINED THE CARBON MONOXIDE STANDARD IN JUNE 2005

HIGH LEVELS OF PARTICULATE MATTER (DUST) CAN OCCUR ANY TIME OF YEAR IN SOUTHERN NEVADA, BUT ESPECIALLY ON WINDY DAYS. DAQEM OFFICIALS PUT INTO EFFECT AGGRESSIVE PLANS TO ADDRESS PARTICULATE MATTER POLLUTION IN THE VALLEY. FOR EXAMPLE, IN 2003 THE DEPARTMENT OF AIR QUALITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT LAUNCHED A CONSTRUCTION ADVISORY TO ALERT LOCAL BUILDERS AND THE PUBLIC IN ADVANCE OF POSSIBLE DUST STORMS. IF THE NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE PREDICTS WINDS OF MORE THAN 25 MILES PER HOUR IN THE VALLEY, AIR QUALITY STAFF FAXES AND E-MAILS NOTICES TO MORE THAN 1,200 LOCAL CONSTRUCTION SITE OPERATORS URGING THEM TO TAKE STEPS TO CHECK AND STABILIZE THEIR PROPERTY FOR BLOWING DIRT AND DEBRIS. DUST ADVISORIES ARE ALSO SENT TO MEDIA THROUGH THE COUNTY'S PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE. LOCAL SCHOOLS, PARKS AND PUBLIC AGENCIES ALSO RECEIVE THESE ADVISORIES. DATA FROM AREA MONITORING STATIONS INDICATES THE PROGRAM HAS BEEN A KEY SUCCESS FACTOR AT KEEPING DUST DOWN ON WINDY DAYS.

THE COUNTY ACHIEVED ATTAINMENT OF THE PARTICULATE MATTER-10 (PM-10) STANDARD IN DECEMBER 2006. DAQEM

HAS THEREFORE SUBMITTED A REQUEST FOR A FINDING OF ATTAINMENT FOR PM-10 FROM THE EPA. THIS IS A REQUIRED FIRST STEP TO SUBMIT A MAINTENANCE PLAN AND RE-DESIGNATION TO ATTAINMENT FOR THIS POLLUTANT.

GROUND-LEVEL OZONE CONTINUES TO BE A CHALLENGE IN THE VALLEY. FORMED FROM A MIXTURE OF OXIDES OF NITROGEN (NOX), VOLATILE ORGANIC COMPOUNDS (VOCs) SUCH AS THE EMISSIONS FROM THE BURNING OF FOSSIL FUELS AND SUNLIGHT AND HEAT, SOUTHERN NEVADA HAS A GROUND-LEVEL OZONE SEASON THAT RUNS FROM MAY THROUGH OCTOBER. IN MARCH 2008 THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY SIGNIFICANTLY STRENGTHENED ITS NATIONAL AIR QUALITY STANDARDS FOR GROUND-LEVEL OZONE. IT'S ESTIMATED THAT CLARK COUNTY WILL BE AMONG NEARLY 350 COUNTIES NATIONWIDE THAT WILL NOT MEET THE NEW STANDARD. CLARK COUNTY HAS BEEN WORKING DILIGENTLY ON THE OZONE ISSUE AND IS AWAITING NEW GUIDANCE FROM THE EPA IN PREPARING PLANS AND PROGRAMS DESIGNED TO MEET THE NEW GROUND-LEVEL OZONE STANDARD.

THE DAQEM PLANS TO UNVEIL A COMPREHENSIVE PUBLIC AWARENESS PROGRAM IN SUMMER 2008 TO INCREASE THE COMMUNITY'S UNDERSTANDING OF THE AFFECT OF AIR POLLUTION AS IT RELATES TO PARTICULATE MATTER, GROUND-LEVEL OZONE, THE AIR QUALITY INDEX (AQI) AND THE NEW AIR QUALITY NOTIFICATION SYSTEM, ENVIROFLASH.

CARBON MONOXIDE, PARTICULATE MATTER AND GROUND-LEVEL OZONE CAN AFFECT THE HEALTH OF EVERY CLARK COUNTY CITIZEN, ESPECIALLY THE YOUNG, THE ELDERLY AND THOSE WITH RESPIRATORY AND HEART AILMENTS, DAQEM TAKES CONTINUAL MEASUREMENTS AT AIR MONITORING STATIONS STRATEGICALLY SCATTERED ACROSS THE COUNTY. WITH THIS DATA THE DEPARTMENT CAN OFFER THE FASTEST AND MOST ACCURATE POSSIBLE AIR QUALITY ADVISORIES AND ALERTS TO THE PUBLIC THROUGH THE NETWORK OF MEDIA OUTLETS AND MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS. ON THE WEBSITE THERE IS ACCESS TO THE AIR QUALITY INDEX THAT REPORTS AND FORECASTS THE LEVELS OF POLLUTANTS ON A SCALE FROM "GOOD" TO "VERY UNHEALTHY."

THE DEPARTMENT OF AIR QUALITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT'S KEY SERVICE AREAS PROVIDE THE DIRECTION AND FUNCTIONALITY TO ADDRESS THE PRESENT AND FUTURE QUALITY OF THE VALLEY'S AIR. THOSE AREAS INCLUDE:

- PERMITTING AND COMPLIANCE – INCLUDES ALL FUNCTIONS AND SERVICES ASSOCIATED WITH THE PERMITTING AND ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS REQUIRED TO ENSURE ADHERENCE TO FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL AIR QUALITY REGULATIONS.

BECOMING A METROPOLIS OF SEVERAL MILLION OVER THE NEXT DECADE SHOULD NOT JEOPARDIZE THE SUSTAINABILITY OF OUR COMMUNITY. BUT, THAT ALL DEPENDS ON OUR ABILITY TO PROTECT THE AIR, RESPECT THE DESERT, AND PRESERVE ALL OF OUR NATURAL RESOURCES, AND THAT IS WHAT CLARK COUNTY'S DEPARTMENT OF AIR QUALITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT (DAQEM) IS DEDICATED TO DOING.

THE DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES MILESTONES

SINCE 2001 CLARK COUNTY HAS PAVED ALL DIRT ROADS IN THE VALLEY THAT LOG 150 VEHICLE TRIPS A DAY OR MORE.

IN 2001 CONSTRUCTION WAS ESTIMATED TO CAUSE ABOUT 27 PERCENT OF THE VALLEY'S DUST COMPARED WITH 36 PERCENT IN 1998. THE FIGURE HAS DROPPED DESPITE THE VALLEY'S ONGOING GROWTH AND CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY.

ON MAY 25, 2005 THE U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY NOTIFIED CLARK COUNTY THAT IT NOW MEETS FEDERAL HEALTH STANDARDS FOR CARBON MONOXIDE, A POTENTIALLY TOXIC GAS PRODUCED MOSTLY FROM TAILPIPE EMISSIONS. THE VALLEY STRUGGLED WITH CARBON MONOXIDE POLLUTION FOR YEARS. OFFICIALS CREDIT THREE KEY PROGRAMS FOR THE VALLEY'S SUCCESS: THE COUNTY'S WINTERTIME CLEANER GASOLINE PROGRAM AND OXYGENATED FUEL PROGRAMS, IN EFFECT FROM OCT. 1 THROUGH MARCH 31, AND THE STATE OF NEVADA'S ANNUAL SMOG CHECK PROGRAM, IN EFFECT SINCE 1983

MAY 3, 2004 THE U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY APPROVED CLARK COUNTY'S PLAN TO CONTROL DUST, OR PM-10. LOCAL AND STATE OFFICIALS WERE REQUIRED TO DEVELOP THE PLAN, FORMALLY CALLED A STATE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN, AFTER THE VALLEY WAS DESIGNATED AS A SERIOUS NON-ATTAINMENT AREA FOR PM-10 ON JAN. 8, 1993.

2004 AIR QUALITY COMPLIANCE OFFICERS CONDUCTED A RECORD 7,004 INSPECTIONS AT VALLEY CONSTRUCTION AND VACANT LAND SITES TO ENSURE COMPLIANCE WITH LOCAL DUST-CONTROL REGULATIONS

2004

CLARK COUNTY ISSUED 3,775 DUST CONTROL PERMITS TO LOCAL CONSTRUCTION COMPANIES, COVERING 36,185 ACRES. IN 2003 THE DEPARTMENT ISSUED 3,045 DUST CONTROL PERMITS, COVERING 30,092 ACRES.

**SINCE
SEPTEMBER
1997**

MORE THAN 15,440 CONSTRUCTION SITE EMPLOYEES HAVE ATTENDED DUST-CONTROL CLASSES

THE COUNTY'S COMPLAINT HOTLINE, 385-DUST (3878) RECEIVES MORE THAN 100 CALLS A MONTH. IT'S DESIGNED TO HELP FIELD COMPLIANCE OFFICERS LOCATE SOURCES OF AIRBORNE DUST. EVERY COMPLAINT IS INVESTIGATED.

2003

THE AIR QUALITY DEPARTMENT LAUNCHED A NEW INITIATIVE TO ALERT LOCAL BUILDERS AND THE PUBLIC IN ADVANCE OF POSSIBLE DUST STORMS. IF THE NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE PREDICTS WINDS OF MORE THAN 25 MILES PER HOUR IN THE VALLEY, AIR QUALITY STAFF FAX NOTICES TO MORE THAN 1,200 LOCAL CONSTRUCTION SITE OPERATORS URGING THEM TO TAKE STEPS TO CHECK AND STABILIZE THEIR PROPERTY FOR BLOWING DIRT AND DEBRIS. ADVISORIES ALSO ARE SENT TO MEDIA THROUGH THE COUNTY'S PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE. LOCAL SCHOOLS, PARKS AND PUBLIC AGENCIES ALSO RECEIVE ADVISORIES. DATA FROM AREA MONITORING STATIONS INDICATES THE PROGRAM HAS BEEN A KEY SUCCESS FACTOR AT KEEPING DUST DOWN ON WINDY DAYS

ANY NEW OR MODIFIED FACILITY IN CLARK COUNTY THAT EMITS REGULATED AIR POLLUTANTS ABOVE CERTAIN LEVELS MUST OBTAIN A STATIONARY SOURCE AIR PERMIT BEFORE STARTING CONSTRUCTION. MORE THAN 3,000 FACILITIES IN CLARK COUNTY HAVE AIR PERMITS, INCLUDING POWER PLANTS, CHEMICAL PLANTS, DRY CLEANERS, COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS, AND GAS STATIONS.

PROVIDED AND HELPED SET UP, AN OZONE MONITORING STATION ON PAIUTE TRIBAL LANDS, IN THE MOAPA VALLEY. SINCE THESE LANDS ARE CONSIDERED THE OUTER BOUNDARY FOR OZONE IN CLARK COUNTY, THIS STATION SHOULD HELP CHARACTERIZE THE IMPACTS OF OZONE COUNTY WIDE

REDUCED TURNAROUND TIME FOR DUST CONTROL PERMITS FROM 14 DAYS TO 2.

UNDER THE WIND EVENT ACTION PLAN, THERE ARE OVER 1,400 SOURCES NOTIFIED OF UPCOMING HIGH-WIND EVENTS WARNING THEM TO STABILIZE THEIR SITES TO MINIMIZE WIND-BLOWN DUST EACH TIME HIGH WINDS WERE PREDICTED.

TO DATE, 23,761 PEOPLE HAVE ATTENDED AIR QUALITY DUST CLASSES.