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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 5, 2008

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CLEAN AIR ACTION DAYS EXPAND INTO YEAR-ROUND CAMPAIGN

FINE PARTICLE POLLUTION PROMPTS WINTERTIME AIR ALERTS

The Dane County Clean Air Coalition (CAC) today announced that the *Clean Air Action Day* program has become a year-round air quality awareness campaign. A *Clean Air Action Day* will be called for the first time in Dane County this winter when air quality data and weather conditions indicate that fine particle pollution is predicted to reach a high level. A *Clean Air Action Day* lets people know that fine particles could reach an unhealthy level for sensitive groups – children, older adults, people with asthma and adults engaged in vigorous outdoor activities.

“Dane County’s air quality has been improving thanks to the efforts of our residents, businesses and government agencies,” said Dane County Executive Kathleen Falk. “However, federal health-based air quality standards have become more strict in recent years. The CAC is committed to improving our air quality and the voluntary steps promoted by CAC will continue to be a large part of that effort.”

In August, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposed six Wisconsin counties, including Dane and Columbia counties, be designated as “non-attainment areas” under the more stringent federal fine particle health-based standard. Fine particles are very small particles with diameters less than 2.5 microns (about 30 times smaller than the diameter of a human hair). Major contributors to fine particle pollution include trucks, passenger cars, off-road equipment, electric power generation, open burning and agricultural sources.

“Unlike ground-level ozone, fine particle pollution is not limited to a specific season and we see a real spike in the winter months,” said Madison Mayor Dave Cieslewicz. “That’s why it was important to evolve the *Clean Air Action Day* program into a year-round campaign to continue educating the public and employers about the simple steps they can take to make a visible difference in our air quality.”

Winter weather in Wisconsin can result in temperature inversions when warm air rises over cold air creating ideal conditions for trapping fine particles and allowing them to build to unhealthy levels. Historical analysis shows the highest fine particle days in Dane County are occurring during the winter months of November through March. In 2007, 14 of the 15 highest monitored values were in the winter.

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Madison Gas & Electric Company / Madison Metropolitan School District / University of Wisconsin-Madison / Wisconsin Department of Administration
Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services / Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources / Wisconsin Petroleum Council
Wisconsin Petroleum Marketers and Convenience Stores Association

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Regardless of the season, a *Clean Air Action Day* will be triggered when DNR meteorologists notify the CAC that a fine particle-related air quality watch has been called because weather conditions may produce unhealthy levels of fine particles on the following day.

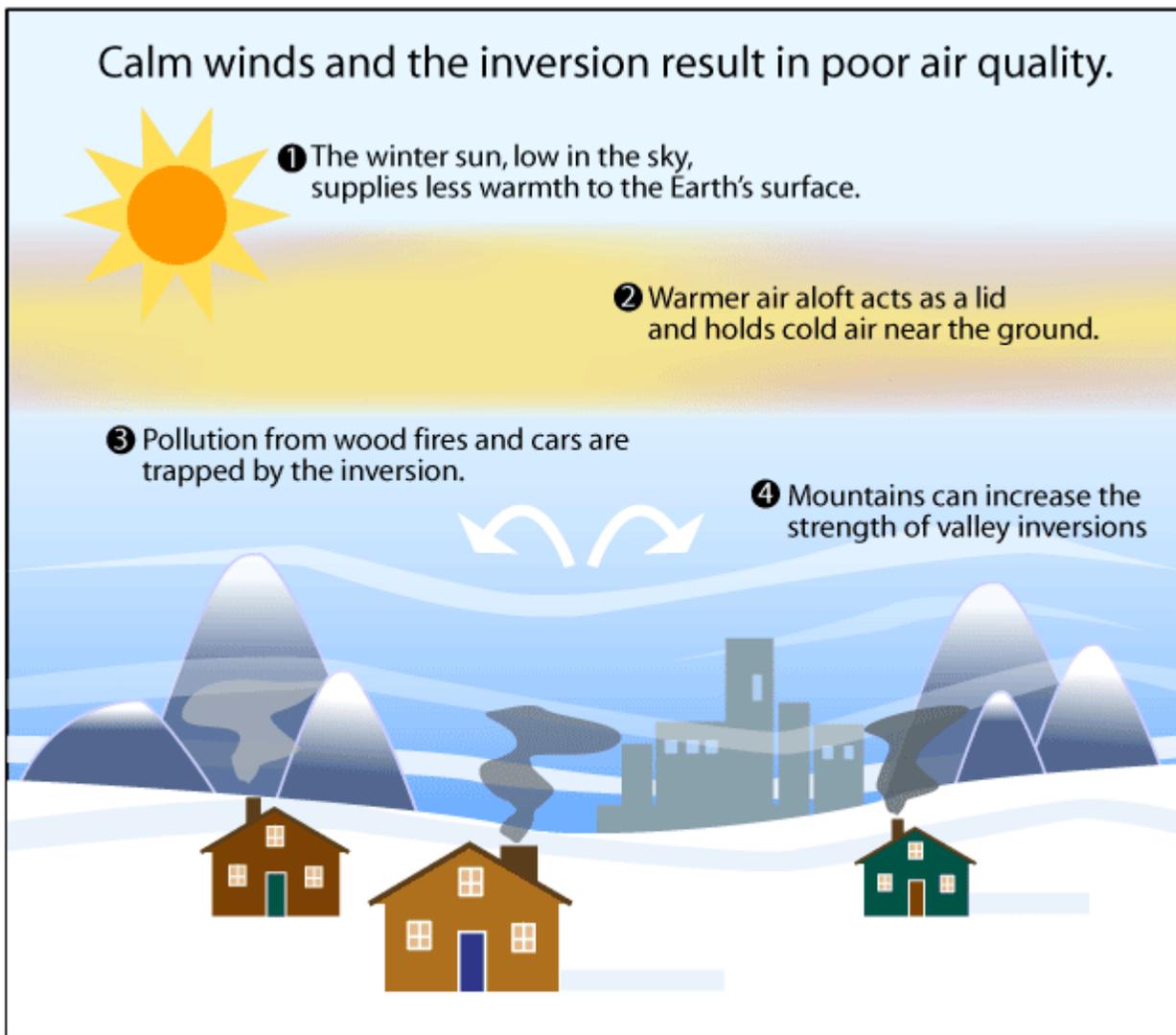
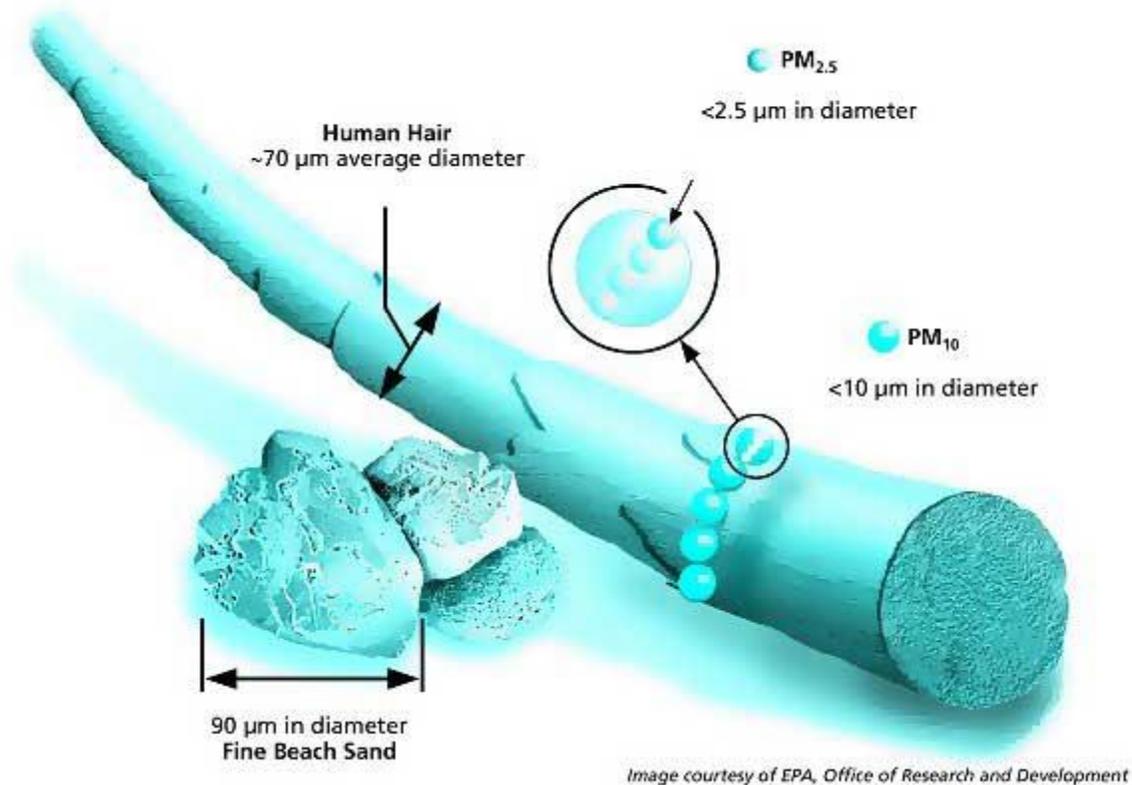


Image courtesy of EPA

Due to their small size, fine particles are easily inhaled and are deeply deposited into the lungs, which can aggravate and even cause serious health problems such as heart and lung disease. On a *Clean Air Action Day*, residents are advised to monitor their health and to consult their physician if they have any health-related concerns.



During a *Clean Air Action Day*, all businesses, government agencies and citizens will be asked to do their share for cleaner air by engaging in fine particle reducing activities. These activities include:

- Reduce vehicle travel by carpooling, taking the bus, delaying trips, or biking or walking. If you need to use your car please reduce speed and limit idling.
- Conserve energy - Reduce energy consumption by turning off electrical devices when not in use and turn down the thermostat.
- Open burning and use of burn barrels should be delayed. Avoid use of wood burning boilers and fireplaces. If you do burn wood, build, small hot fires with dry seasoned wood.