

Winter Clear the Air Campaign Enlists Residents to Tackle Inversions

Community Leaders Gather to Show Support for Alternative Transit this January

Salt Lake City – Winter inversion season has arrived in Utah, with numerous Yellow/Red air days to date. To help tackle the issue of poor air quality in the valley, community leaders from across the state have come together to encourage residents to utilize alternative transit – also known as TravelWise strategies – this January through the new Care to Clear the Air initiative.

“During the Clear the Air Challenge of the past two summers, Utahns have kept over 4.1 million pounds of emissions out of the air,” said Salt Lake City Mayor Ralph Becker. “We’re ready to take it to the next level and tackle our wintertime inversions with our new Care to Clear the Air initiative.”

The Care to Clear the Air initiative encourages residents to utilize an air-friendly – and winter-friendly – TravelWise strategy to help clear the air this January. Residents are encouraged to register online at CareToClearTheAir.org and pick one of three TravelWise options –

- Carpool/Rideshare
- Public Transportation
- Telework/e-Travel

Through interactive community events, real-time Yellow/Red air text alerts, weekly newsletters and fun freebies, residents enrolled in the program will find it easy to do their part to help clear the air and limit the scope and impact of the temperature inversions that trap air pollutants in the valley.

“Over 50% of our wintertime air pollution comes from motor vehicles, which means we all have a role to play to help keep our air clear all year-round,” said Ted Wilson, Governor Herbert’s Senior Environmental Advisor. “Utahns never shy away from a challenge, and I encourage all residents to do what they can to help limit the impact of inversions this winter season.”

The Care to Clear the Air program is the latest Clear the Air initiative from the Air Quality Partners Team behind the Clear the Air Challenge. The month-long program runs January 2011 and encourages residents to utilize winter-friendly TravelWise strategies at least once a week for a personal emissions reduction of 20%.

“A recent survey of Salt Lake County residents found that 69% are already taking steps to reduce their personal emissions on Red air days during winter inversions,” said Becker. “We want to build on that positive action.”

To help reach their weekly goal of at least one TravelWise commute, residents will receive real-time text alerts when Yellow/Red air days or snowy commutes are forecast, in addition to invitations to a series of interactive community “Learn to Ride” events throughout the Salt Lake Valley. Unlike the Clear the Air Challenge, no daily/weekly trip tracking is required for this program.

The stakes could not be higher. According to research from the Utah Department of Health’s Asthma Program, prolonged inversions have been linked to increased hospital visits for asthma throughout the state.

“We all know someone who has been adversely affected by poor air quality,” says Mayor Peter Corroon. “If not ourselves, we have children, parents, grandparents, coworkers and friends who feel the debilitating effects of air pollutants during the winter months. We’re all affected and we all have a role to play to be part of the solution.”

Businesses are encouraged to participate in the Care to Clear the Air campaign. Following a highly successful year for business participation in the 2010 Clear the Air Challenge, the initiative was awarded a prestigious Utah Green Business Award. Interested businesses should contact cleartheairutah@gmail.com for a toolkit and customized program mentorship.

Find Care to Clear the Air on –

- Web: www.caretocleartheair.org
- Facebook: <http://on.fb.me/cleartheairutah>
- Twitter: www.twitter.com/cleartheairutah
- YouTube: www.youtube.com/cleartheairutah
- Blog: www.icareutah.wordpress.com

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