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Ventura County
Air Pollution
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Innovative Grant to the City of Ojai from the Ventura County Air Pollution Control District's Clean Air Fund Supports Conversion of the Public Works Department from Gasoline to Battery-Electric Power

Ojai, CA, July 23, 2018 -- The California Air Resources Board projects that by the early 2020s air pollution from gasoline-powered lawn and garden equipment will exceed the combined emissions from all passenger vehicles (see attached flyer). While passenger vehicle emissions are expected to decline dramatically due to the introduction of much cleaner vehicles, manufacturers of small off-road engines have been slow to adopt similar pollution control technologies for gasoline-powered lawn and garden equipment. The path to cleaner air lies in a new generation of electric equipment including mowers, line trimmers, chain saws and blowers.

The City of Ojai along with the Ventura County Air Pollution Control District will hold a **Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony August 2, 2018 in downtown Libbey Park** at 11 am to display and describe the newly acquired equipment that will service the municipal park and landscape maintenance needs of the City.

According to Ojai Mayor Johnny Johnston: "Leading by example and demonstrating new possibilities is a better approach to changing behavior than issuing orders. My thanks to the APCD, City Council and Staff for supporting this initiative."

This pilot project is the first municipal conversion to zero-emission landscape maintenance equipment in Ventura County. In addition to air quality benefits, the new generation of "green" electric equipment is very quiet. Reduced noise and emission benefits will be experienced by city residents, local businesses, visitors and the public works staff.

“The City of Ojai should be commended for their vision; I’m hopeful other public works departments in Ventura County will also consider utilizing this zero-emission equipment in their landscape maintenance operations” said Mike Villegas, Air Pollution Control Officer for Ventura County.

The City of Ojai has committed to derive 100% of its electricity from renewable resources and therefore can guarantee major environmental benefits. This project provides an example and demonstration for other communities showing the feasibility for improving local air quality along with the health and wellbeing of service personnel --- all while doing something locally to combat climate change.

According to Dr. Michael Benjamin, Chief of the Air Quality Planning and Science Division at the California Air Resources Board (CARB) “there are currently about 16 million pieces of gasoline-powered small off-road equipment in California”, and “unless CARB adopts much more stringent controls, within 15 years, smog-forming emissions from this gasoline-fueled equipment is going to be twice the emissions from all the cars on the road in Southern California. We are developing much more stringent regulations for this category of equipment but in the meantime, we appreciate the initiative that cities like Ojai are taking to voluntarily turn over to the cleanest possible lawn and garden equipment.”

Cost-savings and emission reduction will be documented during the one-year pilot project by American Green Zone Alliance (AGZA) and compiled in a final report to the Ventura County Air Pollution District.

The City of Ojai is a small city in Ventura County set in a scenic valley. The City Council and commissions strive to maintain a high quality of life for all Ojai residents through exceptional community-based programs, support of the arts and cultural activities, and strong community involvement.

The Ventura County Air Pollution Control District (VCAPCD) is the local government agency in Ventura County that protects public health and agriculture from the adverse effects of air pollution by identifying air pollution problems and developing a comprehensive program to achieve and maintain state and federal air quality standards.

The California Air Resources Board is the state agency responsible for promoting and protecting public health, welfare and ecological resources in California through the effective and efficient reduction of air pollutants while recognizing and considering the effects of control programs on the economy of the state.

American Green Zone Alliance is a leader in zero-emission sustainable grounds maintenance strategies. Their mission is to transition grounds maintenance in communities from noisy, dirty fossil fuels into quieter zero-emission electric operation.

VCAPCD’s Clean Air Fund is co-administered with the Ventura County Community Foundation. This charitable foundation is committed to promoting and enabling philanthropy for building long-term capital to benefit Ventura County.