



PORTCORPUSCHRISTI

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Update - Voluntary Action Helps Corpus Christi Region Maintain Great Air Quality

Corpus Christi, TX, USA – Air quality in the Corpus Christi Region is of good quality these days and not through lack of significant effort on the part of Corpus Christi stakeholders and industry. The United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) sets National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for the health and welfare of the public. Specifically, there are NAAQS for six principal pollutants that can affect the air we breathe – ozone, nitrogen dioxide, carbon monoxide, lead and particulates. The NAAQS that has been of closest interest to our community and one that we have exceeded in the past is ozone. The NAAQS for ozone is currently 75 parts per billion for a rolling 3-year average. Currently, the 3-year average for ozone in Corpus Christi is 62 parts per billion at both federal air monitors that are in operation.

The USEPA has a proposal pending to lower the NAAQS for ozone to 70 parts per billion for a rolling 3-year average, and is considering lowering it further. There is significant concern of lowering the standard nationwide as all the major cities in the country could become non-attainment for ozone. This would be a challenge to have all the cities not in compliance with the NAAQS and create severe complications in working to come into attainment. However, even if that is the case, the Corpus Christi Region is still in good standing if the NAAQS for ozone is lowered as low as 65 parts per billion.

*"Having a current ozone average of 62 parts per billion while being the home to the fifth largest Port in the U.S. in terms of tonnage with several major refineries is no small feat", **said Port Corpus Christi Commission Chair, Judy Hawley.***

The Corpus Christi Air Quality Committee has always been an advocate of voluntary implementation of emission reducing measures and has a successful track record as can be seen by the current levels of ozone in our community. For the last 12 years, citizens and industry have been working closely together to improve air quality related to ozone and this year marks an all time low for measured ozone in our community.

*"The Corpus Christi Air Quality Committee and its City, County, and Regional Stakeholders participate in a voluntary USEPA program called Ozone Advance which is aimed at improving a region's air quality. Through our success we can promote our region . We can invite companies to do business here without the level of permitting as areas that aren't in attainment of air quality standards. We can also encourage implementation of voluntary measures that go above and beyond to help maintain our air quality," **said Port Corpus Christi Commission Chair, Judy Hawley.***

The latest Ozone Advance Annual Report outlines 18 specific voluntary actions that stakeholders have taken to reduce air emissions and also summarizes numerous other voluntary actions being taken in our region. These improvements range from monitoring, education, Clean Fleet programs, use of infrared cameras to evaluate emissions from pipeline and tank infrastructure in petroleum handling and refining facilities, CNG fueling stations and purchase of CNG vehicles, bicycle transportation planning, and van share programs.

"The broad array of stakeholders and clean air initiatives of the Corpus Christi Air Quality Group is truly impressive. Industry, small businesses, city and county governments, transportation planners, public transit, and more have worked hard together for over 20 years to keep our air clean. Fleets of gasoline and diesel fueled vehicles have been converted to cleaner burning fuels, work-place anti-idle policies have been passed, vehicles have been checked for pollutants and repaired at no cost to the owners, workplaces have adopted alternative transportation plans for commuting employees, pro-active leak

detection systems have been developed in area facilities, and more," said Corpus Christi Air Quality Committee Chair, Gretchen Arnold.

The ozone season for the Corpus Christi Region, which is when we typically experience our high ozone readings, is late fall (September through November). Citizens can join in the voluntary emission reduction efforts by regularly tuning up personal vehicles, heeding ozone action day warnings put out by the State and curtailing fueling and mowing activities or other activities using small engines on these days, participating in carpooling, and utilizing AutoCheck to verify vehicle emissions are satisfactory.

About Port Corpus Christi

As the primary economic engine of the Coastal Bend, Port Corpus Christi is the 5th largest port in the United States in total tonnage. Our mission; to "Leverage Commerce to Drive Prosperity." Our vision; "To be the energy port of the America's." Strategically located on the western Gulf of Mexico, with a straight, 45' deep channel, Port Corpus Christi provides quick access to the Gulf and the entire United States inland waterway system. The Port delivers outstanding access to overland transportation with on-site direct connections to three Class-1 railroads and uncongested interstate and state highways. Port Corpus Christi is protected by a state-of-the-art security department and an award-winning Environmental Management System. With outstanding management and operations staff, Port Corpus Christi is clearly "The Port of the Lone Star State."

<http://www.portcorpuschristi.com/>

*Port Corpus Christi is a member of **START (South Texas Alliance for Regional Trade)**, a collaborative effort that highlights business opportunities in South Texas in the manufacturing, energy, aerospace, international trade, military and other sectors and the related strategic support provided by Port San Antonio, Port Corpus Christi and Port Laredo. <http://www.southtexastrade.com/>*

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