

Overview

Meaningful community engagement, significant outreach and a robust public process have been essential to the implementation of the District's AB 617 program. During the Community Emission Reduction Program (CERP) development process, the Community Steering Committee (CSC) recommended the District engage in a wide variety of multilingual outreach efforts using both traditional and social media. The CSC is eager to allow community members to see and learn about air quality issues, take advantage of grant programs, and provide real-time access to information from air monitoring equipment deployed as part of the AB 617 process. Members of the CSC acknowledged the District's ongoing air quality outreach and education efforts, but expressed a desire for increasing the volume and types of outreach, focusing it to a truly localized level, and using partnerships with key local organizations to better understand how to deliver needed information to community residents.

Identifying new opportunities for enhanced public engagement is particularly important given that many of the CERP strategies require close collaboration with local, state and community based organizations to ensure meaningful implementation and participation from the public. This increased interest in air quality, particularly as the Valley continues to make great strides with respect to meeting various air quality goals, presents a number of additional opportunities to discuss the significant improvements as well as the hard work that remains to achieve our air quality goals.

CSC Involvement

The Community Air Quality Outreach Strategy adopted as a part of the Shafter CERP was developed with the CSC to respond to the community-specific concerns and go beyond current outreach efforts. From community town hall events and workshops to billboards and in-store signage, the District and the CSC outlined plans to deliver air quality education and clean air funding to the Shafter AB 617 community. This strategy includes using traditional media like radio, TV, billboards and print; digital media like Search Engine Marketing (SEM); and social media, both through paid campaigns and organic posting, to engage the community.

Working with the CSC, the District has informed the Shafter community in a variety of ways, including:

- Posting billboards reminding the public not to burn trash
- Arranging social media ads pointing the public to air quality tools
- Radio, social media and carteles campaign inviting businesses and the community to replace residential or commercial gas-powered yard care equipment with electric
- Advertising the opportunity to eliminate residential wood burning through the Fireplace & Wood Stove Change-out program
- Frequent reminders of how to protect themselves during episodes of poor air quality
- Lawnmower trade-in events allowing residents a one-stop-shop to recycle their old gas mowers and receive a new all-electric mower
- Hearth show-and-tell event allowing residents to visit and ask questions from multiple retailers
- Back-to-School Outreach campaign allowing District staff to engage directly with parents

Measures

Incentive

The Shafter CERP measures encompass a range of strategies to reduce community level exposure burden, including regulatory, enforcement, outreach and education, voluntary incentive-based programs, as well as partnerships with other agencies to address issues outside of the District's direct regulatory authority. The District has increasingly relied on its advocacy efforts to secure state and federal funding sources, and locally-generated funding to implement incentive programs that have become a vital component of the District's overall strategy for achieving the

emissions reductions. These programs provide an effective way to accelerate emissions reductions and encourage technology advancement, particularly from mobile sources (specifically heavy-duty engines), a sector not directly under the District’s regulatory jurisdiction.

During CSC discussions to review potential strategies for implementation in the community, CSC members consistently supported and prioritized measures that would reduce emissions, while also providing tangible benefits to residents in the community. The following is a list of the CSC selected, **incentive**-based measures requiring outreach in the community:

Alternative Fuel Fueling Station	Car Share
EV Charging Infrastructure	Bike Lanes
Ag Equipment	Road Paving & Sidewalk Installations
Alternatives to Ag Burning	Passenger Vehicles Replacement
Low-Dust Nut Harvesters	Transit Bus Replacement
Replace wood-burning devices	Training for EV Mechanics
Agricultural Pump Engines	Residential Air Filtration
Residential landscape equipment	Public Fleet Vehicles
Commercial landscape equipment	Heavy-Duty Trucks
Solar power/energy storage	Electric Yard Trucks & TRUs
Urban greening	Commercial Underfired Charbroilers
Vegetative Barriers	Electric School Buses
Tune-In Tune-Up	Railcar Movers/Switchers

Implementation

In addition to the numerous incentive-based measures that encourage clean-air investments by individuals and businesses within the community, the following list outlines the general **implementation**-based measures necessitating outreach in the Shafter AB 617 community:

Automobile idle-reduction
Air Quality outreach to community
Sharing clean air efforts and opportunities
Joint advocacy for air quality funding
Educate to reduce illegal open burning
Reducing Exposure to Pesticides in the Community
Reduce youth exposure through HAL Schools
Educate about harmful impacts of wood burning

Methods

The CERP outreach plan goes beyond the District’s current outreach efforts to provide community-specific information about local conditions and funding opportunities. Through new media campaigns, community workshops hosted with local civic partners and other outreach methods identified by the CSC and the District, the outreach

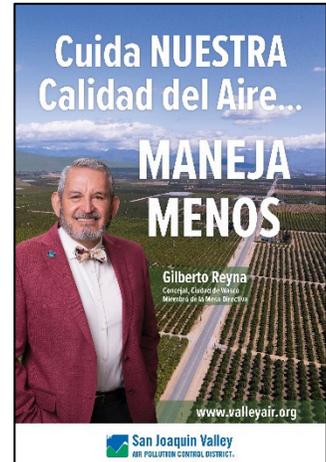
effort will continue to inform the public of funding opportunities, health protection tools and ways to get involved in improving air quality in the community. The following is an overview of the ongoing methods utilized by the District for its AB 617 outreach effort:

Traditional

The District has long utilized print, radio, television and outdoor advertising in its successful outreach campaigns. These mediums deliver information directly into communities through traditional, anticipated methods. The District benefits from well-established relationships with Valley meteorologists and the air quality information they share in their weather segments of the evening television news and local radio broadcast news. While many new mediums exist, traditional outreach methods continue to play a role in District outreach. The District also leverages its strong media relationships with reporters and community affairs programs across the Valley to generate coverage of grant opportunities and air quality progress happening in the Valley.



Example of billboard



Example of carteles poster

Non-Traditional

The District has found tremendous benefit utilizing new media trends to reach Valley audiences, including: digital radio, high speed internet TV (also known as Over the Top Television [OTT] like Apple TV and Amazon Firestick) or Connected TV (CTV), which uses smart televisions to connect directly to the internet without a device, and digital online messaging. Utilizing OTT and CTV allows the District to share its message to Valley residents who no longer watch mainstream network television.

Social Media

The District uses social media to reach a wide variety of audiences across the Valley. The District actively manages accounts on YouTube, Facebook, X, Instagram, LinkedIn and NextDoor. These accounts allow the District to have a real-time presence in the daily lives and conversations of Valley residents. The District can post live or pre-scheduled messages encouraging the public to check daily air quality, apply for grant funding or be aware of a unique air quality episode. The District directs the public to air quality data in RAN and AirNow.gov, utilizes ROAR (Real-time Outdoor Activity Risk) guidelines to help schools and the public understand when to adjust outdoor activities, and frequently shares information about its many grant programs like the Fireplace & Wood Stove Change-out, Clean Green Yard Machines and Drive Clean in the San Joaquin. The District also visually enhances these messages with photos and direct links to the referenced tools or to the online grant application portal.



Direct

Direct marketing consists of any marketing that relies on direct communication or distribution to individual consumers, rather than through a third party such as mass media. Unlike other strategies, direct marketing allows agencies to create targeted campaigns quickly to reach a specific audience given their interests or geographic location. The District’s direct marketing efforts potentially include crowd canvassing, neighborhood canvassing, direct mail pieces, emails and text-based announcements within the Shafter community. The District utilizes in-house graphic designers to produce multilingual outreach pieces in English and Spanish.



Partnerships

Community engagement is essential to the success of the CERP as well as the AB 617 program as a whole. Establishing working partnerships with local agencies to execute the CERP measures is a critical piece of the program’s implementation. From land management agencies, cities, counties and fire agencies to non-profits, environmental justice groups and green teams, partnerships of all kinds are necessary to increase community awareness and get clean air funding into the hands of local residents. Partnership examples include coordination with the City of Shafter, County of Kern and Caltrans on road improvement and bike path projects, and work with the Richland School District to get the charging station infrastructure built for electric school buses and establishment of ongoing communication with school administrators, nurses and athletic directors.

Events

District staff looks for opportunities to host workshops, town hall meetings and gatherings within the community to share information directly with local residents. One example was the District’s Lawnmower Exchange event held at a hardware store within the community. The District provided a one-stop, single-day event for residents to exchange their old high polluting gas mowers for an all-electric cordless mower at no cost to them. An event like this allowed the District to simplify the grant process and help residents gain access to clean-air equipment. Similarly, the District has coordinated Fireplace Show & Tell events where hearth retailers and District staff gather in a neutral setting (coffee shop, community center) and discuss the negative health impacts of wood burning, the benefits of changing out wood burning devices and the progress and funding being made available through AB 617.



Schools

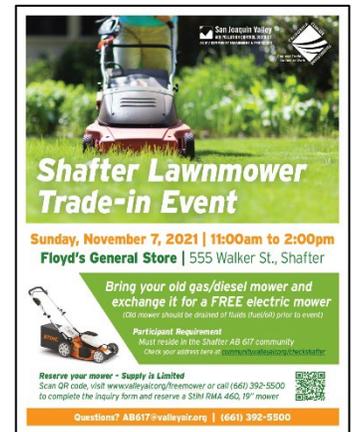
Through AB 617, the District has developed localized strategies to increase community awareness of real-time changes in air quality, clean air efforts, funding opportunities and how communities can get involved. These strategies have been a primary focus of the Shafter CSC. For example, District staff visited schools within the boundary to pass out information about avoiding idling, protecting themselves from wildfire smoke impacts, how to take advantage of clean air funding through AB 617 and how to engage with the AB 617 CSC. This “back-to-school” outreach campaign occurred over several weeks in the AB 617 communities. Additionally, District staff have developed dozens of positive relationships and opportunities to continue engaging students and campuses across the Valley, and now have the ability to connect both directly and virtually, thanks to the evolution brought on by the COVID pandemic.

CSC Direct Support

The District has supplemented printed information with electronic communications, such as emails and webpages, whenever possible. Another method the District has utilized to share information is the CSC members themselves. For example, the District mailed CSC members copies of event and program flyers, such as the Lawnmower Trade-in event flyers, Clean Air Rooms flyers and the Fireplace Change-Out Show & Tell event flyers, to share with family and friends.

Mini Grants

AB 617 requires CARB and air districts to develop and implement additional emissions reporting, monitoring, reduction plans and measures in an effort to reduce air pollution exposure in the state’s most disadvantaged communities. Given that 20 of the 30 most disadvantaged communities in California are in the San Joaquin Valley, this process is bringing additional clean air resources and strategies to many Valley communities. In 2022, the District developed an outreach mini-grant program to enlist the support of community non-profits in connecting their constituents to information, resources and incentives made available through the Community Emission Reduction Programs that have been developed in each of the Valley’s four AB 617 communities. There is no set deadline for mini grants, and applications are accepted on a rolling basis each calendar year. The application is available [here](#).



Possible mini-grant projects include:

- Bilingual (English/Spanish) outreach at local events (community fairs, farmer’s markets, wellness events, and farmers markets) within the target AB 617 area. Teams offer AB 617 brochures for more information and have canvassers explain available AB 617 incentive programs.
- Students advocating for air quality awareness by promoting no idling at their school sites and sharing some simple steps that youths can do to help air quality, such as riding a bike or walking to school.

Outreach Resources

The District created a detailed tracking document for the public to follow the progress of CERP implementation in Shafter. The progress tracker is updated monthly and available [here](#).

The District has created an outreach resources tab for each of its AB 617 committees. Flyers and information related to events and project plan outreach for the Shafter community are available for the public and committee to use can be found [here](#).