

## AIR QUALITY ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2008

- DAQ completed its work with the Climate Action Plan Advisory Group, which has been developing recommendations for reducing greenhouse gas emissions in North Carolina, as well as analyzing the costs and economic benefits. CAPAG's final report with recommendations was completed in October.
- DAQ and DENR continued to work closely with the Legislative Commission on Global Climate Change, which is dealing with broader issues, such as whether North Carolina should set a cap or goal for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. DAQ staff made presentations to the legislative panel and served as liaisons between the commission and CAPAG.
- DAQ worked with the Utilities Commission to submit the annual progress report on the Clean Smokestacks Act in June. The act requires North Carolina's coal-fired power plants to reduce their ozone, haze and particle-forming emissions by three-fourths by 2013.
- DAQ worked with DENR to recruit new members of The Climate Registry, a voluntary effort for businesses, institutions and government agencies to track and report their emissions of greenhouse gases that contribute to global climate change. DENR is a founding member of the registry. DAQ also began including greenhouse gases in its emissions inventory program for permitted air sources for the first time on a voluntary basis, with mandatory reporting to start in 2009.
- DAQ continued its air quality forecasting program based on the new, more stringent federal ozone standard – which the EPA lowered from 0.08 parts per million to 0.075 ppm. DAQ issues forecasts for six metro areas across the state: Asheville, Charlotte, Fayetteville, Hickory, the Triangle and Rocky Mount. DAQ also worked closely with Forsyth County Environmental Affairs Department, which handles air forecasts for the Triad metro area. Forecasts are issued for ozone in all seven areas from May through September, and for particle pollution year-round in all of metro areas except Rocky Mount (which lacks a PM monitor).
- DAQ helped respond to the massive Evans Road wildfire in Eastern North Carolina by setting up air quality monitors surrounding the fire. At the fire's peak, monitors measured some of the highest particle-pollution levels the division has ever recorded – at levels 30 to 60 times higher than the air quality standard. That led DAQ to start issuing air quality - smoke forecasts for the coastal region for the first time.
- In May, DAQ and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources awarded \$800,000 in grants for projects to reduce air pollution from motor vehicles. This year's grants, which included 16 projects from 12 counties, included projects such as retrofitting school buses with controls to curb diesel emissions, expanding

biodiesel storage and distribution equipment, and re-powering construction equipment. DENR awarded the grants through the Mobile Source Emissions Reduction Grants program, which is administered by DAQ.

- DAQ continued to work with Progress Energy on a statewide effort to increase usage of compact fluorescent lightbulbs (CFLs). CFLs conserve energy, save money and reduce air pollution. The highlight of the program was the N.C. State Fair, where Change A Light NC distributed about 9,000 free CFLs – provided by Progress Energy. The Web site for the program is [ChangeALightNC.org](http://ChangeALightNC.org).
- DAQ continues to conduct air quality modeling and develop plans for bringing areas into compliance with the federal ozone and particle pollution standards. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has designated 32 North Carolina counties as non-attainment areas for the 8-hour ozone standard and 3 counties non-attainment for the fine particle (PM 2.5) standard. Monitoring shows that all of the state's metro areas, except Charlotte, have achieved compliance with the old 0.08 ppm ozone standard, and DAQ preliminary modeling shows that most of the state should achieve compliance with both the old ozone and the existing PM 2.5 standards by 2009. However, much of the state will be out of compliance with the new 0.075 ozone standard.
- DAQ continued its involvement in VISTAS, Visibility Improvement State and Tribal Association of the Southeast, a regional effort to reduce haze and improve visibility in pristine natural (Class I) areas.
- DAQ worked with the Division of Motor Vehicles to put in place its new sticker-less inspection system for cars and trucks. The system will synchronize motor vehicle registration renewals with safety and emissions inspections, so that they are all due at the same time each year. The phase-in for sticker-less inspections began November 1, 2008.