



*Serving local governments in Muscatine and Scott Counties, Iowa;
Henry, Mercer and Rock Island Counties, Illinois*

FOR RELEASE May 22, 2007

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Gena McCullough, AICP, Planning Director
Bi-State Regional Commission
P.O. Box 3368
Rock Island, Illinois 61204-3368
(309) 793-6302, Ext. 146

OZONE “SEASON” BEGINS

On May 1, 2007 State agencies nationwide began monitoring for ground-level ozone, often called smog. That means monitors at Scott County Park and in the Moline area are now activated. There is a network nationwide of monitors measuring pollutants during "ozone season." The typical ozone season is May through September each year. The Quad Cities remains in good standing for ozone measures. The Quad Cities Air Quality Task Force continues to watch readings to raise awareness on air quality issues. The Quad Cities Air Quality Task Force has been working locally since 1998 for cleaner air by raising awareness on air emission reductions.

Air quality forecasts are typically provided by state agencies, using the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Air Quality Index (AQI), a uniform index that provides general information to the public about air quality and associated health effects. The Quad Cities generally has index ratings of "good" air quality (green color code). However, our area has had short periods of unhealthy levels of ground-level ozone within the last three years (orange color code) where sensitive groups, like children, elderly, and those suffering respiratory illness are impacted by poor air quality.

The Task Force will spearhead a marketing campaign. It will be initiated mid-summer as part of a grant from the Iowa Department of Transportation. It will promote mobility choice through public transit – "Hands-Free Commuting that saves money, the air, and gives you time to yourself". The average driver spends about 44 cents per mile or more on their vehicle, including ownership and maintenance.

Motor vehicles are a major producer of air pollution in the Quad Cities, according to a 1999 air emissions inventory conducted for Scott County by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. There are many simple actions drivers can take to help improve Quad Cities air quality. First and foremost, take the bus or share a ride. Visit www.qctransit.com for bus rider information.

For those driving, try not to top off your gas tank which releases fumes into the air and cancels the benefits of the vehicles's anti-pollution devices. Trip chain by combining errands into one trip. Ride or walk instead of driving. Use direct deposit and save a trip. Smart consumer choices help improve air quality. Purchase more fuel efficient vehicles and those with fewer emissions. Maintain vehicles and tires regularly to prevent getting stuck on our area bridges during construction season and creating traffic delays!

These small changes in our travel choices can have a BIG impact! For example, a well-maintained vehicle produces 20% less ozone-related emissions, saves money on gas, and means less traffic congestion due to breakdowns! In addition, properly inflating your tires can save you up to 18 gallons of gas per year. Carpooling, using transit, walking, or bicycling—just **one day a week** for a year—can save the typical commuter about 1,200 miles on their vehicle and about \$455 in total driving costs. The savings could really add up!

When you consider that we breathe approximately 3,800 gallons of air per day compared to drinking one gallon of water, it is clearly important to be "Aware of Air". You can get more information on local ozone efforts by contacting Bi-State Regional Commission at (309) 793-6300 or visiting their website at <http://www.bistateonline.org>. Remember, "It all adds up to cleaner air."

* * END * *