

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**DANE COUNTY CLEAN AIR COALITION URGES COUNTY RESIDENTS TO FOLLOW
“BURN WISE” PRACTICES THIS WINTER HEATING SEASON TO REDUCE AIR POLLUTION**

Fine Particle Pollution in Dane County: Winter is a Peak Emissions Period

While fine particle pollution can occur year round, Dane County often experiences higher concentrations of fine particle pollution, or “PM 2.5”, during the winter period between November and March. This is due to a number of factors, including wood burning for home heating, increased use of electricity for lighting, increased use of vehicles in colder weather, and meteorological factors during this time of year. One relatively easy way for residents to reduce their contribution and exposure to unhealthy levels of fine particle pollution is to reduce the emissions that come from residential wood burning.

Emissions from Wood Burning in Dane County

Recent EPA Region V data indicate that the County contributes more than 500 tons-per-year of PM2.5 emissions through the use of non EPA-certified wood stoves and fireplace inserts. Dane County is one of only 8 counties across 6 states (MN, WI, IL, IN, MI, OH) that reached this level of PM2.5 emissions contributed by non-EPA certified wood stoves and fireplace inserts.

Based on the 2008 U.S. Census American Housing Survey, there are more than 17,000 non EPA-certified freestanding wood burning stoves or wood burning fireplace inserts in operation in Dane County. The survey found that of those households, around 4,000 are burning wood as their main source of heat during the home heating season. The remainder of the 17,000 are burning wood in those two types of devices either as a secondary source of heat or “recreationally/ occasionally”.

“The Dane County Clean Air Coalition wants to make residents aware of simple steps they can take to reduce fine particles and other emissions that pollute the air. By following tips on how to burn wisely, Dane County residents who choose to use wood stoves or fireplace inserts for heat can reduce their emissions from this source,” says Lisa MacKinnon, Project Coordinator for the Dane County Clean Air Coalition. “These emission reduction practices can help residents protect their homes, their health and the air we all breathe, while also reducing heating costs and staying comfortable this winter.”

What's in Wood Smoke? Wood smoke is made up of a mixture of components such as carbon monoxide, volatile organic compounds and fine particle pollution that aren't healthy to breathe indoors or out – especially for children, older adults and those with heart disease, asthma or other lung diseases. Excessive smoke from a fireplace or an old (pre-EPA certification) wood stove can affect members of your family and neighbors downwind of the source, as well as contribute to an overall decline in outdoor air quality.

Dane County's air quality currently meets the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for fine particle pollution (PM2.5). However, as the County grows and federal public health standards are strengthened to reduce the negative health impacts of criteria air pollutants, including PM2.5, it is important that we continue to take steps to reduce our emissions.

While no single activity will get us to cleaner air, learning to *burn wisely* is one tool that you can use to *do your share for healthy air*.

If you're burning wood this winter, you can have a cheaper, safer, and healthier fire by following these *Burn Wise* tips:

- Burn only dry, seasoned wood. It's better for the air and your wallet. Dry, seasoned wood is more efficient at heating your home and can add up to significant savings over the winter. Look for wood that is darker, has cracks in the end grain, and sounds hollow when hit against another piece of wood or consider using a wood moisture meter.
- Replace an old, inefficient stove with an EPA-certified wood stove or fireplace insert. These models are more efficient than older models and keep your air cleaner, your home safer and your fuel bill lower, while keeping you warm. An estimated 12 million Americans heat their homes with wood stoves each winter, and nearly three-quarters of these stoves are not EPA-certified. EPA-certified wood stoves emit 70 percent less particle pollution and are approximately 50 percent more energy efficient than wood stoves manufactured before 1990. Go to the U.S. EPA's *Burn Wise* website for more information: <http://www.epa.gov/burnwise/>
- Maintain your wood stove or fireplace and have a certified technician inspect it yearly. A certified technician can clean dangerous soot from your chimney and keep your wood stove or fireplace working properly, which reduces your risk of a home fire.
- Never burn painted or treated wood or trash as these can release a variety of toxic air emissions.
- If you have another source of heat, do not use your fireplace or wood stove on winter days that are forecast to be Clean Air Action Days for fine particle pollution.

For more air pollution reduction ideas for Dane County residents, employers and organizations, visit www.healthyairedane.org and <http://www.healthyairedane.org/woodstove.aspx>