

**Air Quality Public Education Committee**  
**Tuesday, July 19<sup>th</sup>, 2011, 10:00 – 11:30 a.m.**  
**Meeting Summary**

**Attendance**

Mike Boothe, Johnson Co. Env. Dept.  
Jennifer Logan, Johnson Co. Env. Dept.  
Brook Rentz, UG-DAQ  
Whitney Bynum, UG-DAQ  
Ryan Hamel, SBEAP  
Ruth Redenbaugh, MEC  
Bridget Moss, KCATA  
Ron McLinden, Transit Action Network

Erica Forrest, Children's Mercy Hospital  
Mike Knechtel, Weather or Not Inc.  
Darrin Dressler, MARC RideShare  
Jody Ladd Craig, MARC  
Andy Dandino, MARC  
Jen Houston, MARC  
Amanda Graor, MARC  
Doug Norsby, MARC

**SUMMARY**

**1. Introductions and Approval of March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2011 and May 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting Summaries**

Participants introduced themselves and approved of the March 1<sup>st</sup> and May 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting summaries.

**2. Ozone Forecasting**

There were five exceedances this year: April 13, and July 10-12, and again on July 18. We have issued four ozone alerts: June 6 fell just short at 74 ppb, July 11 exceeded at 78ppb at Rocky Creek, July 18 exceeded again at the Rocky Creek monitor at 78ppb, and another ozone alert has been issued for today July 19. We talked about the drought in the southern plains at the last meeting, and it is starting to creep north and affect us. It won't stay this hot throughout the summer, but we can expect it to be hotter and drier overall. Fortunately, we haven't seen a lot of pollution moving into the area. We've seen a few red hours recorded, but the eight hour average has been nowhere close to a red alert. Tomorrow is going to be close to an alert so there is an ozone watch on for tomorrow. Generally we haven't seen anything close to the high red numbers in the last several years.

**3. 2011 Public Education Campaign**

Jody introduced Jen Houston as the new Air Quality Program support staffer from Public Affairs. Stephanie Blucker has taken a position in Seattle and extended her thanks and appreciation to the members of the committee.

**• Media Campaign**

Stephanie had mentioned the broad outline of the media campaign at the last meeting, but Andy Dandino provided a much greater level of detail on the media campaign being undertaken. We have taken a comprehensive approach in terms of reaching a variety of audiences across multiple mediums. The campaign includes ads on four network TV stations and their companion websites, the Kansas City Star's

website, over 1000 spots on six stations on Time Warner Cable, print ads in regional newspapers and the star, billboards, radio, and bus ads. Television ads are cycling between the 2009 We All Share the Air spot and the 2010 Healthy Yards/Healthy Community spot related more to landscaping affects. The ads will run through early September including some targeted web spots on weather pages. Based on feedback from the awareness survey, regional newspapers have been targeted in Johnson, Wyandotte, Clay, and Platte Counties. We also have an ad in the Kansas City Royals program. Radio ads are programmed for commute drive times when people are in their car and likely to consider their plans for the next day. Some money has been held in reserve for a late summer push if we need to respond to ongoing ozone issues.

Jody reported that we have had an unusually strong response from the media to the ozone alert releases. They are interested in finding some angle or twist on the releases. The media has done a very good job of being on target with their ozone reporting. They've brought in both scientific and medical professionals to discuss the topic.

- **Gas Cap Testing**

Jennifer reported that the Johnson County Gas Cap testing events have tested about 325 vehicles with about 25 failures. The events at the DMVs went really well. It served as a way to involve the personnel at those locations with ozone education. She thinks this is largely because of the introduction of gas cap testing. The car care clinics with both gas cap testing and emissions testing have gotten a great response. The numbers of people stopping for testing has not decreased at all. We will be doing emissions clinics again in September and October. Cap failure rates are still between seven and ten percent.

KCATA and MARC checked seven or eight park and ride lots as well as the employee parking lot for KCATA. The JO and MARC have been checking gas caps at park and ride locations as part of commuter appreciation events serving each of their major bus lines.

MARC is going to do an in-house gas cap testing and then plans to open up the opportunity by request on a meeting by meeting basis with the assistance of MARC's Green Team.

UG has been able to work with Johnson County Environmental to build experience with gas cap testing.

#### **4. Social Media Report**

Our social media consultant has finished their report. We had about fifteen responses to our RFP, but the consultant selected was Sparkloft out of Portland. They had experience with working on projects with small budgets and limited staff. This report offers suggestions for integrating social media in its various forms into our existing program. The greatest advantage of investing in social media appears to lie in finding good ways to link our program with other stakeholder agencies so that we can support each other. One of the best outcomes of the report is the format and design of a content calendar which is used to plan messages and links ahead of time. These can then be entered into a publication deck (available for a very reasonable subscription fee – i.e. \$20/mo) so that the material is released over time on a pre-arranged schedule. Many of the guidelines can be very helpful to other programs at MARC and potentially many of the other agencies attending this meeting. A couple major benefits of using social media are that it is inexpensive to use because the tools are already available, and you are going to where the audience looks for shared

information. There are also some ideas for mixing up content, approach, and timing. We will still have to make sure that enough time is dedicated to maintaining responses to comments.

The report also conducts a survey of air quality programs use of social media with critiques and demonstrates how social media can be very flexible in how it is used according to audience and resources.

## 5. Alternative Transportation Reports

### • Metropolitan Energy Center – Clean Cities

Ruth reported that there are three biodiesel events planned nearby in Lawrence. There is also a biodiesel workshop planned at the Kansas Speedway on August 12. UMKC has an operational recharging station in place and there will be an announcement event in September which will coincide with the welcome to new students. The KCPL electric charging locations were announced at Black and Veatch on June 24. Construction has begun on a number of charging stations which will be completed by the end of July: two will be at JCCC, two at Park Place in Leawood, one at Black and Veatch. Later installations should be available by the end of August at Commerce Bank at 134<sup>th</sup> and State Line, Harley Davidson Manufacturing plant on Congress, Lee's Summit City Hall, and Union Station. Grand opening events will be forthcoming. Charging will be free through 2012 while the stations are monitored to evaluate the level of use at different locations. There are electric vehicle available in our region and hopefully they will start getting some use.

### • KCATA

The UMKC pass will work as a swipe pass for all students registered on August 1. They have torn down a parking garage as part of a campus project, so the pass will be particularly handy. This includes available access to hospital hill via Troost MAX. The Troost bridge is supposed to be opening in August which will improve the speed of the trip.

Independence, MO is studying their long term transit options. They will probably put whatever service they design out for bid and KCATA will have to bid on it. KCATA is making their customers aware of the fact that Independence is evaluating their transit needs and design of service.

### • Ride Share

Darrin reported that as of the second week of the Green Commute Challenge there are 41 teams registered with 1078 participants. During July and August, these contestants will commit to taking alternative transportation. This year we have added a new component called 'explorers and guides' which is intended to reach people who have been curious about trying alternative modes of transportation. Experienced guides will be matched up with explorers based on their mode of interest and geographic location. Darrin and the RideShare program help the guides and explorers contact each other and walk through some ideas to overcome hesitations or concerns. So far, the obstacles for explorers have been one or two unique issues such as interpreting a bus schedule or finding a parking spot for their bike. Social media has made a difference in communication between RideShare and the Green Commute Challenge Participants.

### • Johnson County Transit

Cris provided a written update to the committee. They have grant funds for four new 40' buses which have been received and are going to be used along the Shawnee Mission Parkway and Metcalf corridors.

Groundbreaking for the new park and ride shelter at Oak Park has begun and is expected to be completed in

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mid-September. We are looking at some service cuts and modifications for fiscal year 2012. About \$264,000 has to be cut so they are looking at routes to cut as well as trips that can be cut due to low ridership or long deadheads. Those cuts will be effective at the beginning of next year. HNTB is working with them to design more efficient downtown routing through the loops. The FTA funded implementation of bus on shoulder operations on I35 including some improvements to existing route improvements and park and ride locations. Some of these locations have been identified for real time arrival signage. New shelters and markers are being developed for a number of large park and ride locations. There are going to be eighteen new transit stations along Metcalf, Martway, Shawnee Mission Parkway, and Johnson Drive. Construction will begin in late 2011 or early 2012.

- **TIGER Grant**

Jody talked about the ten million dollars in ARRA grant funding for the TIGER program. Funding cannot be used on vehicles or operation costs, but it can be used to upgrade infrastructure including curbs, transit centers, shelters, and other structures or amenities along several bus routes. There is a meeting tonight, and two more in August. There is an alternatives analysis on the downtown circulator which could end up being a modern streetcar, a bus, or a no-build option. Three or four weeks ago the Jackson County alternatives analysis was started to look at transit going east. There is a TIGER website available with all the latest developments at [marc.org/transportation/tiger](http://marc.org/transportation/tiger)

### **Next meetings: Sept. 20, 2011 and Nov. 1, 2011**

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**Special Accommodations:** Please notify the Mid-America Regional Council at (816) 474-4240 at least 48 hours in advance if you require special accommodations to attend this meeting (i.e., qualified interpreter, large print, reader, hearing assistance).

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