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MEETING SUMMARY

AIR QUALITY FORUM

February 10, 2026

10:00 – 11:30 a.m.

MARC Board Room/ Hybrid

Attendance

Members & Alternates

Richard Rocha, Bayer
Jodi Gooseman, Kansas City, MO Central Fleer
Brian Alferman, Johnson County Dept. of Health & Environment
Dr. John Neuberger, KU Med, Sierra Club (KS)
Rollin Sachs, Johnson County Dept. of Health & Environment
Doug Watson, Kansas Dept. of Health & Environment
John Frederick, Missouri Dept. of Natural Resources
Michael Park, City of Lee's Summit
Emily Olack, Jackson County Public Health
Jennifer Stewart, Wyandotte County Public Health
Wes Minder, Platte County
Allison Smith, Kansas Department of Transportation

Others

Sullivan Brown, Weather or Not

MARC Staff

Karen Clawson
Doug Norsby
Bridget Koan
Bob Pentuic
Tom Jacobs
Lynelle Haugabrook

1. Introductions and Determination of Quorum

Introduction were made and quorum was met.

2. Approval of October and December Meeting Summary*

The meeting summary for October and December were APPROVED.

3. Mass Notification Study Report

Doug Norsby presented the regional Mass Notification System (MNS) study. This study was initiated after communication challenges during a 2024 recycling fire in Kansas City, Kansas. The incident revealed disparities in alerting capabilities between counties, prompting MARC and the Metropolitan Emergency Managers Committee (MEMC), with KDHE support, to examine regional notification practices.

The study reviewed the various platforms used across jurisdictions—primarily Everbridge, along with Connexus, Textcaster, Rave, and Regroup—and found that while features are similar, contract timing and local control complicate consolidation. Recommendations emphasized developing shared regional criteria for issuing alerts, standardizing message templates and expanding joint training that includes public communication. The study also highlighted the need for inclusive outreach strategies for vulnerable populations, including elderly residents without cell service, individuals with limited English proficiency and people with disabilities. Approaches such as maintaining landline alerts, using printed materials, partnering with community organizations and conducting pre-incident outreach were identified as essential.

Next steps include gathering cost and contract information from all jurisdictions, identifying opportunities for alignment, and engaging emergency managers to determine interest in pursuing a consolidated platform. Participants discussed regional coordination challenges, cross-state considerations, and the importance of shifting from strictly local command-and-control models toward more regionally aligned communication practices.

4. 2026 Work Plans: WAY TO GO and Air Quality Program

The WAY TO GO team presented its 2026 work plan, highlighting the program’s mission to promote sustainable, affordable and equitable transportation options. Originally launched as RideShareKC in 1980, the program was rebranded in 2023 to better distinguish it from similarly named organizations. The team showcased its multimodal trip-planning and ride-matching tools, available via desktop and mobile app and emphasized the importance of reducing single-occupancy vehicle trips to improve air quality. Transportation accounts for 34% of regional greenhouse gas emissions, and even small behavior changes—such as carpooling twice a week—can significantly reduce emissions.

With the 2026 FIFA World Cup expected to bring approximately 600,000 visitors to the region, WAY TO GO is preparing to support business continuity, mitigate congestion and promote sustainable travel options. The program is expanding outreach to chambers of commerce, business associations, and community organizations, and is developing printed and digital toolkits for employers. Questions were raised about coordination with Lawrence and Douglas County, as well as concerns about the timing of KCATA's reinstated bus fares shortly before the World Cup.

The Air Quality Program outlined its 2026 work plan, focusing on the annual public awareness campaign. With a budget of approximately \$245,000, the program is preparing a refreshed campaign supported by a new website expected to launch by late March. MARC is reviewing 11 proposals submitted through an RFP process for new creative materials, aiming to modernize messaging that has been reused for several years. The campaign will begin in early to mid-May, aligning with the onset of ozone season. Staff will also continue outreach work to local meteorologists, who play a key role in sharing air quality information during weather broadcasts. The MARC air quality team will conduct outreach to local governments to support their ozone season response.

5. Local Government Outreach Planning

The MARC air quality team will conduct outreach to local governments to support their ozone season response. Outreach will include communications in MARC blogs that target city and county management, meeting with local government staff and providing lunch-and-learns to build air quality awareness among local staff.

6. Federal Updates

Karen Clawson provided an overview of several bills related to air quality that she recommended the forum watch for. These include:

- **New Source Review (NSR) Permitting Improvement Act (H.R. 161)**
Proposal redefines what is considered a modification. Currently, industrial facilities install modern pollution controls when building new projects or making significant modifications.
- **Clean Air and Building Infrastructure Improvement Act (HR 4214)**
The legislation aims to provide clarity in meeting [NAAQS](#) and seeks to modernize the Clean Air Act's preconstruction permitting process for industrial facilities. It aims to provide regulatory certainty for manufacturers by allowing exemptions from new air standards if the EPA fails to concurrently publish final regulations and implementation guidance.
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The EPA is also reconsidering the following regulations:

- Endangerment Finding
- Emissions rules for cars and trucks
- Exceptional events rule
- Good Neighbor Plan
- Particulate matter National Ambient Air Quality Standards

Additionally, EPA recently indicated it will no longer quantify (monetize) the economic and health benefits of reduced PM2.5 and ozone exposure, stating that scientific methods lack sufficient precision. This shift directly impacts the justification for tighter (lower) PM standards.

7. State Rule in Progress

There were no state reports.

8. Other Business

With no other business, the meeting was adjourned.

9. Next Meeting – Tuesday, April 14, 2026 at 10:00 a.m.

10. Adjourn

**Action item*