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### **Home Wood Heating Season Officially Over**

The 2005/06 Eugene/Springfield and Oakridge home wood heating advisory seasons, which run from November through February, are officially over. However, residents are asked to continue to minimize burning to help reduce the impact of smoke on the community.

“Even though the seasons have closed, local air quality can still be impacted by smoke”, says Sally Markos, of Lane Regional Air Protection Agency (LRAPA). Our weather has a major influence on air quality and there is still the possibility of cold temperatures and stagnant air. During these periods, we are likely to see air pollution levels rise when woodstove use is high.”

The local advisory programs are part of a strategic plan designed to keep air quality at healthy levels. The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has set national standards that all communities must meet. Communities that fail to meet the standards are required by law to develop strategic plans to clean up the air.

LRAPA calls daily burn advisories, either green, yellow or red, to let residents know if burning is allowed on any given day. On yellow days, residents are asked to voluntarily avoid burning, if possible. With exceptions for low-income households with exemptions, burning is prohibited on red days. The Eugene/Springfield area experienced two prolonged periods of stagnant air in November and December during which yellow advisories were issued on 18 days. During this same period, the City of Oakridge experienced seven yellow advisory days and one red advisory day.

LRAPA has implemented strategic plans to improve air quality in both communities, including the recent Warm Homes/Clean Air program for the City of Oakridge. Overall, the strategies are working, as demonstrated by improvements in air quality over the last several years.

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