FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 10, 2012

A JOINT AIR QUALITY & HEAT ADVISORY ISSUED BY THE
BUTTE COUNTY AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT DISTRICT and
BUTTE COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

To:
Public Safety Personnel
News Media
Adjacent Air Quality Management Districts
Butte County & City Managers
Local/State Law & Fire Federal
Local Hospitals
School Officials
Sac. Valley Air Basin Coordinating Council
County Health Officer
California Air Resources Board
Environmental Protection Agency

From: W. James Wagoner, Air Pollution Control Officer
Dr. Mark Lundberg, MD, Health Officer

The Butte County Air Quality Management District Air Pollution Control Officer, and the Butte County Public Health Officer are issuing this updated Air Quality Advisory to notify the public of continuing poor air quality conditions in the foothill region of Butte County due to smoke from the Chips fire. Smoke impacts will increase through the morning and early afternoon hours with improvement through the rest of the day. Smoke can be very heavy at times, with air quality varying between moderate to very unhealthy levels based on the Environmental Protection Agency Air Quality Index (see below). Smoke impacts to valley locations will continue periodically. These conditions will continue until the fire is extinguished.

The major air pollutant of concern is fine particulate matter also known as PM2.5. While all persons may experience varying degrees of symptoms, the more sensitive individuals, such as the young, aged and those with respiratory conditions are of greatest risk at experiencing more aggravated symptoms which may include, but are not limited to coughing, watery and itchy eyes, and difficulty in breathing.

Persons experiencing questionable or severe symptoms should seek professional medical advice and treatment.

The following actions are generally recommended in areas impacted by smoke:

- Stay indoors with windows and doors closed; run air conditioner on “recirculation” setting;
- Limit outdoor exertion by children, students and adults;
- Reduction in travel including unnecessary driving;
- Avoid the use of non-HEPA paper face mask filters which are not capable of filtering extra fine particulates.
- Keep airways moist by drinking lots of water.

The National Weather Service has also issued a Special Weather Statement for Northern California indicating a prolonged period of hotter temperatures that are expected to potentially last into next week. In Butte County, valley regions could see highs between 105 to 110 degrees while foothill locations can expect to reach the upper 90’s and possibly low 100’s. During this heat wave, residents should take preventative measures to protect themselves from heat-related illnesses.

While overheating can occur in any healthy individual, the elderly, young children and people with certain medical conditions are at highest risk for heat-related illnesses. For those most susceptible, hot environments should be avoided whenever possible.

Going to an air conditioned environment is often the best option to avoid heat-related illnesses. If adequate air conditioning is unavailable at home, there are a number of accessible public places to cool off during the day. Venues such as stores, shopping centers, libraries or other public locations with air conditioning are good alternatives. Even a few hours spent in air conditioning can help your body stay cooler when you go back into the heat.

Here are some further recommendations to prevent heat related health conditions:

- Remember to hydrate frequently. Rehydration is recommended by drinking plenty of non-alcoholic fluids.
- Avoid strenuous activities in hot weather conditions, especially between 11a.m. and 3p.m. which is typically the hottest part of the day.
- Wear lightweight, light colored clothing. Wear a hat when outdoors.
- Never leave pets or people, especially children and infants, unattended in cars during excessive heat conditions.
- Animals also need a cool, shady place to sleep during hot weather, as well as plenty of clean, fresh water that is accessible at all times.

The District will be issuing daily air quality forecasts to the media. Forecasts will be issued for the following locations: Chico, Gridley, Oroville, Paradise, Forest Ranch and Concow/Yankee Hill. The public can sign up for the daily forecasts by visiting the District's air quality forecast website at http://www.enviroflash.info/signup.cfm. The forecast is based on the Air Quality Level, determined by the monitored 24-hour average of fine particulate matter (PM2.5) at each site. Since the Air Quality Level is an average, air quality can reach levels above and below the average during the day.

Again, keep in mind that air quality can change rapidly at different times during the day due to wind shifts; therefore, it is important to monitor the smoke throughout the day in your area and make outdoor plans accordingly. The Air Quality Index (AQI) and Visibility Chart below may be used to estimate the air quality in your area.

Questions regarding air quality may be directed to the Butte County Air Quality Management District at **332-9400** during regular business hours. Questions regarding the heat-related recommendations may be directed to the Butte County Department of Public Health at **538-7581** during regular business hours.

Information will be updated and posted to the District website as available at www.bcaqmd.org.

Air Quality Index (AQI): Particle Pollution and Visibility Chart

Index Values	Levels of Health Concern	Cautionary Statements	Visibility Range in Miles
0-50	Good	None	10+ miles
51-100*	Moderate	Unusually sensitive people should consider reducing prolonged or heavy exertion.	5 – 10 miles
101-150	Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups	People with heart or lung disease, older adults, and children should reduce prolonged or heavy exertion.	3 – 5 miles
151-200	Unhealthy	People with heart or lung disease, older adults, and children should avoid prolonged or heavy exertion. Everyone else should reduce prolonged or heavy exertion.	1.5 – 2.5 miles
201-300	Very Unhealthy	People with heart or lung disease, older adults, and children should avoid all physical activity outdoors. Everyone else should avoid prolonged or heavy exertion.	1 – 1.25 miles
301-500	Hazardous	People with heart or lung disease, older adults, and children should remain indoors and keep activity levels low. Everyone else should avoid all physical activity outdoors.	< 0.75 miles