



*St. Louis Regional Clean Air Partnership*

**2006 in Review**

## Executive Summary

Formed in 1995 by the American Lung Association of Missouri, St. Louis Regional Chamber and Growth Association, East-West Gateway Council of Governments, Washington University and others, The St. Louis Regional Clean Air Partnership's mission is to increase awareness of regional air quality issues and to encourage activities to reduce air pollution. The Partnership accomplishes this through an aggressive outreach and communications program that is focused on disseminating the daily air quality forecasts and engaging the public in the regional clean air effort by educating area residents and businesses about various steps they can take daily to help keep our air clean.

Today, more than a decade since the launch of The Partnership, almost 70 percent of the people living in the St. Louis region are familiar with air quality issues facing our metro area. The Partnership has played a key role in fostering that awareness and has been the driving force behind the region's voluntary clean air initiatives.

With memories of the relentless pattern of heat, haze and humidity that plagued the region during the 2005 air quality season still lingering, The Partnership kicked off its 2006 air quality awareness campaign with a message that encouraged area residents to do all they could to reduce emissions in order to prevent a repeat performance during 2006. As in years past, The Partnership urged area residents to consider alternative transportation modes such as carpooling and mass transit to improve the region's air quality and reminded individuals of the many additional steps they can take at home and at work to help clear the air. The Partnership also shed light on the important role that trip planning can play in reducing emissions by encouraging commuters to utilize MoDOT's Gateway Guide system, which provides real-time traffic information that drivers can use to better plan their route to avoid idling in traffic tie-ups and highway construction zones.

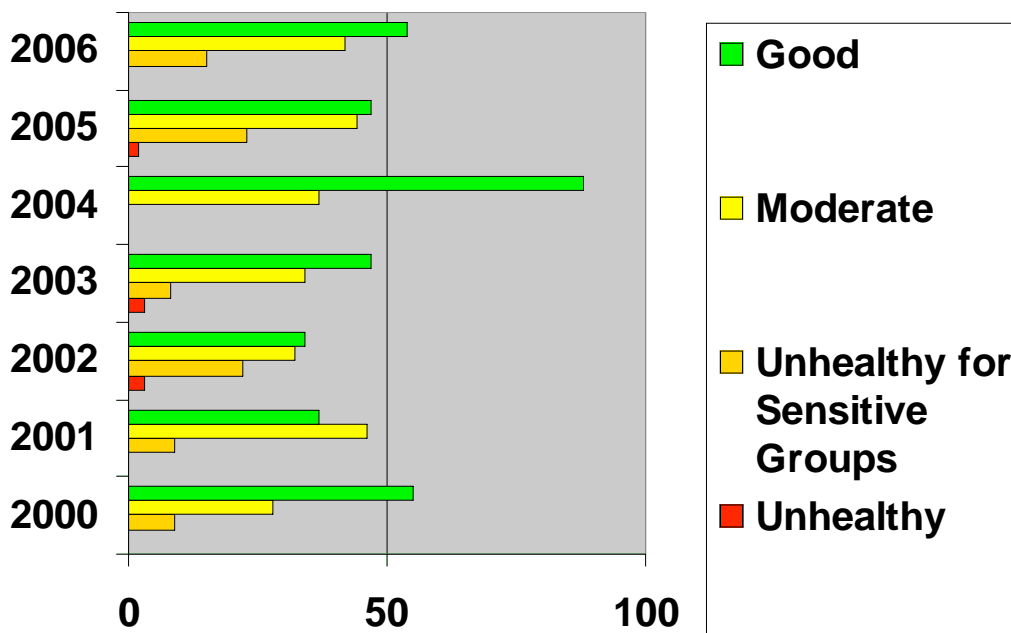
At the end of 2006, nearly 1,000 area businesses, organizations, schools, hospitals and government agencies had signed up as members of The Partnership, doing their part to voluntarily reduce emissions. The designated Clean Air Coordinator (CAC) or Employee Transportation Coordinator (ETC) at these member worksites continued to play an important role in the Air Quality Forecast alert system. When the forecast calls for poor air quality in the

form of an “orange” or “red” day, the American Lung Association, which handles the day-to-day activities for The Partnership, notifies these contacts, who then spread the word to fellow employees and customers and reminds them to consider taking actions to reduce emissions to protect their health and the health of others in the community.

Active partners such as MoDOT, Metro, RideFinders, Madison County Transit and Citizens for Modern Transit, also play a vital role in encouraging behaviors that reduce automobile emissions in the St. Louis community.

The following pages summarize the key highlights and initiatives of the 2006 Air Quality Season, and provide an overview of the important role the St. Louis Regional Clean Air Partnership continues to play in improving our region’s air quality.

The air quality in St. Louis was significantly improved in 2006 as compared to 2005, when a relentless summer weather pattern of heat, haze and humidity resulted in a summer plagued by poor air quality conditions. Better weather overall contributed to a 2006 Air Quality Season highlighted by no unhealthy or “red” days and just 15 “orange” days - when the ozone pollution reached levels considered unhealthy for sensitive groups. The St. Louis region experienced 54 good or “green” air quality days and 42 moderate or “yellow” air quality days. The variations in our air quality from year to year underscore the link between our air quality and the weather patterns; however, we can’t rely on the hope of good weather alone to keep our air quality in healthy ranges. Even when we get a reprieve from poor air quality, our region must continue to work together to reduce emissions – the contributing factor to ozone pollution over which we do have some control.



The chart above is a comparative analysis of the number of green, yellow, orange and red air quality days during the 2000-2006 air quality seasons based on the Air Quality Index measurements. The information is unvalidated. (Sources: Illinois EPA, Missouri Department of Natural Resources and East-West Gateway Council of Governments)

## 2006 Highlights

a. *Kick-off Event*

Approximately 500 downtown St. Louis employees gathered at Kiener Plaza to help The Partnership kick off the 2006 Air Quality Awareness Campaign on May 22. The event provided another excellent opportunity for The Partnership to provide downtown employees with a wealth of information on the negative health effects of poor air quality and the steps they can take to clear the air. Attendees were treated to live music and complimentary Ted Drewes frozen custard as they visited more than a dozen informational booths manned by Partnership members. St. Louis Mayor Francis Slay was also on hand, marking the occasion by declaring May 22 Clean Air Day in the City of St. Louis. KMOV-TV's Kent Ehrhardt broadcast live from the event, letting viewers know that the first air quality forecast of the season would be that evening. Partnership organizations represented with booths at the 2006 event included:

- American Lung Association of Missouri
- Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America
- Citizens for Modern Transit
- Ferguson B.I.K.E. project
- Gateway Clean Air Program
- Madison County Transit
- Metro
- Missouri Department of Natural Resources
- Missouri Department of Transportation
- RideFinders
- St. Louis Regional Clean Cities Program
- Trailnet
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- U.S. Green Building Council/Sierra Club

Our thanks go out to all the ETCs and CACs who helped to promote the event in advance and to all our exhibitors.

b. *New Initiatives for the 2005 Season*

During the 2006 season, The Partnership also embarked on a variety of new air quality initiatives. These included:

- 1) **Development of a bi-fold brochure for CACs & ETCs** – At the start of the season, The Partnership developed a brochure, targeting CACs and ETCs, which was designed to help them explain the relationship between commuting choices and the region's air quality to their fellow employees. The brochure contained helpful information on the

health effects of poor air quality, and a variety of tips to help CACs and ETCs enhance their Clean Air programs at work.

2) **Outreach to various groups:**

- a) **University environmental organizations** – At the start of 2006, The Partnership contacted student environmental groups from universities across the St. Louis area to encourage them to become members of The Partnership. As a result of the outreach, St. Louis University's 'Just Earth' group became a new partner, and the Student Government Association at the University of Missouri – St. Louis also expressed interest in getting involved in the clean air effort for the coming year.
- b) **Downtown apartment complexes** – Prior to the Clean Air Fair, The Partnership contacted apartment complexes in the downtown area located within walking distance of Kiener Plaza to ask for their help in promoting the Fair to their residents by either including a story on the Fair in their resident newsletter or by posting flyers highlighting the event around their properties. As a result, Mansion House Apartments and Vanguard Apartments each ran articles in their newsletters, and Plaza Square Apartments hung flyers advertising the fair in its laundry room.
- c) **Head Start facilities** – Building on its relationship with Riverbend Head Start and Family Services, The Partnership reached out to other St. Louis area Head Start facilities to encourage them to become members of the organization and help protect their students from the dangers of summertime air pollution. Through its relationship with Riverbend Head Start, The Partnership provides the organization with air quality forecasts on days when poor air quality is predicted to help educators be advised in advance of potential unhealthy ozone days, making it easier for them to limit their students' outdoor activities accordingly and help them to avoid being exposed to harmful levels of ozone pollution. The outreach generated significant interest from several Head Start organizations, which we hope to have fully engaged during 2007.
- d) **Older Adult Communities** – During 2006, The Partnership worked to inform the older adult population about the health risks of poor air quality by teaming up with a variety of senior residential communities to host informational

presentations for their residents. Presentations were held during the months of August and September at Garden Villas West and three communities operated by Lutheran Senior Services.

- e) **Daycare Outreach** – Brochures and additional clean air information regarding the importance of healthy air to children were given to several area daycare centers. Plans are currently underway for The Partnership to offer daycare center staff education, certified by the state, in hopes of educating the staff on the health risks associated with poor air quality.
- f) **Faith Community Outreach** – The Partnership reached out to area houses of worship by offering presentations, articles and other information that would be of interest to them. Articles were written for three area churches and printed in their newsletters. Brochures were also provided to the churches for distribution and congregant education.
- g) **University and College Outreach** – The Partnership worked to inform local universities and colleges about the importance of clean air in 2006. As a result, seven new Clean Air Coordinators were recruited at Washington University, and staff at Saint Louis University and University of Missouri – St. Louis expressed interest in joining the clean air effort in 2007.
- h) **Local business community** – The Partnership also continued its outreach to the local business community by working to schedule informative presentations to Chamber of Commerce members and large employers groups across the region. The presentations were designed to show how poor air quality can affect the bottom lines of their businesses.

3) **Lunchbox giveaway** – To give individuals an added incentive to visit The Partnership's website for up-to-date air quality information during the last half of the summer, The Partnership held its first-ever lunchbox giveaway in July. Individuals who visited the website and signed up to receive the daily air quality forecast via e-mail received complimentary Clear Air Partnership insulated lunchboxes filled with clean-air themed souvenirs. The promotion, which served as a reminder that brown-bagging lunch is a good way to avoid mid-day automobile trips that can contribute to poor air quality, generated significant response. As part of this program, SSM St. Mary's worked with The Partnership to design and implement an internal clean air contest that included lunchbox incentives. This successful contest will serve as the pilot program upon which 2007 contests will be based.

c. *New and Continued Partnerships*

During the 2006 season, The Partnership again added to the list of hundreds of area businesses and organizations that are working to spread its clean air message. The City Museum was among the organizations that joined The Partnership this year, while others expanded their involvement. New, continued or expanded partnerships for 2006 include the following:

**KMOV-TV** – which continues to be a staunch ally of The Partnership, providing hundreds of thousands of dollars of air time to spread the clean air message through its forecasts, PSAs and news coverage. Even without the draw of a Green Day Giveaway during 2006, KMOV was able to commit significant air time to this effort, and we look forward to continuing our partnership in 2007.

**The St. Louis Post-Dispatch** – which ran almost two full pages of PSA-style ads for The Partnership that helped us to augment the exposure through the wraps we purchased and enabled us to get our message in front of their readers several times during the summer months. This unpaid advertising support was a much appreciated contribution.

The contributions of these various entities are helping The Partnership in its goal of increasing awareness of regional clean air issues and encouraging participation in activities to reduce emissions.

**Hazelwood and Parkway School Districts** – which followed in the footsteps of the **University City and Festus School Districts** by distributing a letter and flyer with tips for reducing emissions during the 2006 air quality season to their K-8<sup>th</sup> grade students during May. Combined, the schools reached nearly 15,000 students and their families. The Festus School District participated in the flyer distribution for the third straight year, reaching 2,100 of its students and their families, while University City participated for the second consecutive year, distributing information to approximately 2,500 students.

**The City Museum** – which signed on as a new partner for 2006, agreeing to work alongside The Partnership to educate area residents about the dangers of poor air quality. The museum has designated an on-site CAC, who announces the air quality forecasts each morning during the air quality season, posts air quality information and tips on employee bulletin boards, makes brochures on air quality available at the front desk and displays posters with the air quality forecast and tips throughout the facility. A link to The Partnership's site has also been posted on the museum's website blog. We look forward to collaborating with the museum on additional initiatives during the 2007 season.

*Examples of other partners continuing to work with the Partnership or expanding their outreach efforts during 2006 included:*

**Missouri Department of Natural Resources** – which expanded its relationship with The Partnership by teaming up to participate in the ongoing window cling initiative that kicked off last year with MoDOT and 1<sup>st</sup> Choice Courier. In an effort to encourage their fleet drivers to care about clean air while they are on the road, DNR has asked its drivers in the St. Louis area to display clean air themed window decals, featuring a list of steps they could take to reduce emissions while they are on the road, in their work-vehicle windows. To date, The Partnership has provided DNR with 120 decals for its St. Louis drivers, and DNR plans to expand the distribution of the clings to drivers statewide in the coming months.

d. *2006 Air Quality Awareness Survey*

After a year off in 2005, the American Lung Association once again commissioned an independent research firm to conduct a survey of public awareness of regional air quality issues. Carried out via interviews of residents from eight counties in the Bi-state, the survey asked for individuals' opinions on a variety of air quality-related topics, including awareness of poor air quality days, knowledge and sources of air quality information and methods of improving air quality. The survey concluded that there has been little change in public attitudes about and awareness of air quality issues in the St. Louis area over the past two years.

Concern over the environment has remained steady since 1998, when the ALA and The Partnership began conducting the regional surveys. Poor air quality continues to top the list of the most serious environmental issues facing our area. In terms of air quality information, nearly 70% of those surveyed noted that they were "very or somewhat" familiar with daily air quality information, and that number has remained consistent since 1998. Nearly half of respondents also noted that they are "always" or "usually" aware when a red or orange day is declared in the area, signaling consistent familiarity with these conditions since the most recent survey was conducted in 2004, even though there have been a limited number of red and orange days during the same timeframe.

With regards to improving air quality, more than 40% of respondents noted that they believe carpooling to work would help improve air quality the most. A nearly equal amount of individuals claimed that they change their behavior "a lot" or "some" based on air quality information, and this number has remained steady since the release of the 2004 survey.

While the Partnership is pleased that public awareness is holding steady after a year when the region has experienced good air quality, we continue to remain steadfast in our efforts to promote air quality concerns and encourage behaviors that will reduce emissions for the long term.

The Partnership is using the survey results to guide our efforts for the 2007 season to pinpoint areas where additional outreach work can be done, in order to keep people and businesses in the region engaged in the air quality effort, and willing to do their part to help clear the air.

e. *Rideshare Fairs and New Carpools/Vanpools/Transit Riders*

RideFinders, the regional ridesharing agency, continued its active involvement with The Partnership, hosting 175 Clean Air Fairs between April and August as part of its air quality season campaign. Citizens for Modern Transit (CMT) also continued its outreach efforts to regional employers and transit riders throughout the metro area. As a result, CMT signed-up an additional 715 new transit commuters in 2006, bringing the total number of registered transit riders to 6,929. The organization also saw a significant increase in the number of employers offering pre-payroll tax deductions and transit subsidy programs. RideFinders saw consistent gains in 2006, which helped the organization to set a number of new milestones. RideFinders wrapped up the season with almost 5,700 registered carpoolers and vanpoolers and active ridesharing programs at more than 900 employers. Metro and Madison County Transit also saw steady ridership increases during the year.

### **Ongoing Communications Initiatives**

During 2006, The Partnership continued to utilize a variety of communication tools to keep its partners and the public at large informed about the regional clean air efforts in progress.

Public relations remained a key component of The Partnership's communications program. During the Air Quality Awareness Campaign, it was used extensively to warn the public about the impact of poor air quality and to inform residents about steps they could take on poor air quality days to improve the region's air quality. It was also used to promote events and promotions, such as the Clean Air Fair at Kiener Plaza and The Partnership's first-ever lunchbox giveaway, and to generate articles and interviews about the impact of our region's air quality.

### **Looking Forward**

Plans are already well underway for the 2007 Air Quality Awareness Campaign. The Partnership is actively seeking new members and can work with any size employer, in any industry in the St. Louis region, to help identify an existing employee who can serve as a CAC and be the liaison to The Partnership. Participation is free and requires little time commitment, so any company or organization can become part of the region's clean air effort. The Partnership also will continue to recruit major St. Louis venues to help encourage their customers to care about clean air. The start of construction on I-64 presents a great opportunity to further engage both businesses and the commuting public in the regional clean efforts in 2007. We look forward to doing our part to help encourage alternative modes, routes and work arrangements during the course of this project.

As the coordinator of The Partnership's day-to-day activities, the American Lung Association of Missouri also is tasked with overseeing The Partnership's funding. The Partnership has been funded by in-kind donations and federal Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) monies since its inception in 1995. In-kind donations in recent years total more than \$450,000 annually. Heading into the 2007 season, The Partnership will be funded through the new CMAQ grant secured in conjunction with the Missouri Department of Transportation, a long-time member of the partnership and active participant in the ongoing outreach efforts.

### **Contact The Partnership**

For more information on the St. Louis Regional Clean Air Partnership and its programs, or to learn more about how to get involved in The Partnership's efforts, visit [www.cleanair-stlouis.com](http://www.cleanair-stlouis.com), or call (314) 645-5505.