



### **EPA to issue final ruling on stricter standards for ozone pollution**

As residents endure another hazy St. Louis summer, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is preparing to make its final ruling on a stricter standard for ground-level ozone aimed at improving air quality and lung health nationwide.

A decision on a tougher National Ambient Air Quality standard that will fall between 60 and 70 parts per billion is expected in August. The standard will replace ground-level ozone limits set in 2008, which many felt were not strict enough to protect human health.

Two years ago, the National Ambient Air Quality standard was lowered from 84 parts per billion to 75 parts per billion, but the standard was highly criticized because it wasn't enough to protect public health with an adequate margin of safety. The EPA's new ruling is highly anticipated because the proposed standards are the strictest to date for ozone, and have the potential to greatly improve the nation's air quality and the health of many over time.

Ground-level ozone pollution is created when emissions from factories, power plants, landfills and motor vehicles react with the sun.

The EPA cites ground-level ozone as one of the most persistent and widespread pollutants nationwide. And as a result, it can contribute to a variety of health problems. Exposure to ozone causes burning and inflammation in sensitive tissues and acts as a respiratory irritant, causing shortness of breath, chest pain, aggravation of asthma and other respiratory conditions, and an increased risk of premature death in people with heart or lung disease. Children, older adults and those who work outdoors are especially vulnerable to the effects of ozone.

With so many health conditions attributed to ozone exposure, the EPA made the decision to review the ozone standard set in 2008 and determined that the National Ambient Air Quality standard should be further decreased in order to help Americans breathe easier and live healthier lives.

Depending on the final standard that the EPA adopts, it's estimated that the ruling will yield health benefits worth \$13-\$100 billion, and will prevent 1,500-12,000 premature deaths by 2020.

For the many children, seniors and other individuals who suffer from asthma and lung disease, the stricter ozone standard represents positive news. However, it still remains critical for each of us to do our share for cleaner air to help area residents breathe easier.

### **Metro launches first phase of service restorations**

Thanks to the recent passage of Proposition A, which provided transit funding through a half-cent sales tax increase in St. Louis County, Metro customers are now taking advantage of more frequent rush-hour MetroLink service and restored services on 20 bus routes throughout St. Louis City and County. As part of the restorations, Metro has also expanded and redesigned and/or restructured some bus routes in order to better serve transit needs. The restored services took effect a year to the day after Metro was forced to cut transit services to thousands of area commuters due to a lack of funding.

To celebrate the first day of service restorations, Metro representatives distributed cookies at MetroLink and MetroBus stations and transfer centers throughout the system on June 28. St. Louis County Executive Charlie Dooley and Chesterfield Mayor John Nations were also stationed at the North Hanley MetroLink Station and MetroBus Transfer Center to welcome back passengers and thank them for their support of transit.

This first phase of service restorations marks the beginning of a new era in public transit in the region. As a result, thousands of Metro customers who previously lost their link to employment, healthcare, shopping and recreation once again have a reliable and convenient way to get around town.

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On Aug. 30, Metro will announce additional regional transit improvements as the second phase of service restoration begins.

With transit use playing such an important role in the fight to improve the region's air quality, we encourage you take advantage of the newly restored routes for your commute to work or other locations throughout the region. A complete list of the Phase 1 service restorations is available at [www.metrostlouis.org](http://www.metrostlouis.org).

### Local entrepreneur puts a green spin on event planning

She's been studying environmental science since she was 12 years old and planning events since her college years. Now with 12 years of experience under her belt planning events nationwide, Rachel McCalla is working with her own company to plan environmentally conscious events in the St. Louis area.

McCalla founded Lucky You, LLC in 2006 to fulfill her main focus, which is to provide green alternatives in event planning. Since its inception, the company has hosted a variety of events that include street festivals, weddings, parties, fundraisers and fashion shows.

At times, McCalla says her work has proven to be challenging since many people have yet to embrace the concept of green events. Despite the fact that more companies and individuals are making the choice to go green, she says many still believe that hosting a green event can be too expensive. But, according to McCalla, the opposite is true.

"Green events are typically less expensive because you'll buy most of what you need from local vendors," McCalla said. "The total cost will be much less than if you had bought from somewhere else."

For her green events, McCalla only buys from local floral shops, wineries and local organic food producers. This not only decreases the steep costs associated with shipping items from outside of the area, but it's also better for the environment because the items used are traveling fewer miles to market. As a result, energy is saved in transport-sources and fewer emissions are released into our air.

In addition to buying locally, McCalla also emphasizes the importance of repurposing while planning events.

"I think with all green event planning, you just have to look at something and say, 'what can I make that into?'" McCalla said. "That's what we try to do, and we can repurpose just about anything."

In the past, McCalla has used grass and asparagus fern as napkin rings, wine corks as name card holders and naturally grown plants like kale and ivy as part of centerpieces. She also tries to use only products that are bio-degradable and eco-friendly, such as bamboo plates and soy candles.

Though McCalla plans many different kinds of events, she works most closely on weddings, planning about three green weddings each year with hopes of greatly increasing the number in the years to come.

"Of all the events I plan, weddings are the ones that can make a large impact on the environment in the long run," McCalla said. "Experts have predicted that in the next 25 years, we will not see a decrease in weddings or receptions. When you think about how much is spent and thrown away on weddings, it's mind-boggling. None of it is ever used or repurposed - it's just mass-produced. If we can say no to those things and use something that is sustainable, we'd be so much better off."

Outside work, McCalla does everything she can - from recycling to washing and reusing Ziploc bags to being a vegetarian - to make sure she is being eco-friendly.

Professionally, she remains committed to educating people about the many environmental benefits of hosting green events.

"Whether it's hosting a green event or living a greener lifestyle, it's very important that people realize what an impact going green can have," McCalla said. "If a lot more people realized it, we'd be in a better place. That's why I offer what I offer."

To learn more about going green and helping improve the region's air quality, visit [www.cleanair-stlouis.com](http://www.cleanair-stlouis.com) or call the American Lung Association at (314) 645-5505, ext. 1007. For more information about Lucky You, LLC, visit [www.luckyyoustl.com](http://www.luckyyoustl.com).

## Support The Partnership on Facebook and Twitter

Since The Partnership launched pages on Facebook and Twitter in February, individuals in the St. Louis area have been just a click away from accessing a wealth of information about the region's air quality. Since the launch, we've gained a number of Facebook fans and Twitter followers, and we're excited to see those numbers increase, as support for our social media efforts continues to grow.

With the St. Louis region in the midst of the air quality forecasting season, residents can find air quality-related information quickly and easily via Facebook and Twitter. As a fan of The Partnership's page on Facebook, individuals can view daily air quality forecasts, find links to air quality-related news and information and engage in discussions with other fans through the discussion board feature. In addition to these activities, users can access information about upcoming green-themed events being held in the St. Louis area.

The daily air quality forecast can also be accessed on Twitter, and we're working to help area residents learn about easy lifestyle changes that can help improve air quality by regularly posting green living tips on our Twitter page.

Social media is making it easier than ever for St. Louis residents to stay updated with The Partnership's initiatives and programs and to stay engaged in the clean air effort. If you still haven't logged onto our Facebook and Twitter pages, there's no better time than now to check us out. Our page on Twitter is located at [www.twitter.com/gatewaycleanair](http://www.twitter.com/gatewaycleanair), while the Facebook fan page can be found by typing "St. Louis Regional Clean Air Partnership" into the search bar. Links to both pages are also available on The Partnership's website at <http://www.cleanair-stlouis.com>. Be sure to stop by today!

## St. Louis neighborhoods hold farmers' markets throughout summer season

In such an urban setting, it seems unlikely that St. Louis residents would have the chance to experience events, such as farmers' markets, that resemble those held in rural and small town areas. However, St. Louis is actually home to several farmers' markets that are held from springtime until the end of the summer season. Visitors can purchase locally grown produce, flowers and gifts, all while exploring the beauty and distinctiveness of neighborhoods in the St. Louis area.

Lower prices await individuals who go to farmers' markets. And the environment benefits greatly because all products sold at these markets are produced locally.

Operations at chain grocery stores often require that fresh produce and other food goods be shipped from all over the United States, and sometimes from other countries. The shipments of these goods result in the release of greenhouse gases and pollution into the air, which further adds to the declining air quality.

In contrast with grocery stores, farmers' markets are more environmentally friendly. Since items that are sold at the farmers' markets are produced locally, sellers are able to avoid traveling long distances to deliver their goods, which reduces the amount of greenhouse gases and pollution in the air. Along with reducing greenhouse gas emissions and pollution, individuals who buy goods from farmers' markets are also fueling the local economy by making purchases from local sellers.

Following is a list of farmers' markets that are located in and around the downtown St. Louis area. Next time you are in the mood for fresh produce, we encourage you to give one of the local farmers' markets a try, rather than heading to the grocery store. You'll have a great experience while helping the environment at the same time.

Farmers' Markets in and around Downtown St. Louis			
Name	Location	Day	Time
Downtown	Locust Street, between 8th and 9th Streets and the old post office plaza	Thursday	4 to 7 p.m.
Market in the Loop	6655 Delmar Boulevard	Thursday through Saturday	9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
North City Farmers' Market	Corner of North 14th Street and St. Louis Avenue	Saturday	9 a.m. to 12 p.m.
Soulard Farmers' Market	730 Carroll Street	Wednesday through Friday	8 a.m. to

			5 p.m.
Soulard Farmers' Market	730 Carroll Street	Saturday	6 a.m. to 5 p.m.
St. Louis Community Farmers' Market	3664 Arsenal Street	Second Saturday of the Month	9 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Tower Grove Farmers' Market	Tower Grove Park, West of the Pool Pavilion	Saturday	8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

### We need your input!

As we continue our work to improve the air quality in the St. Louis region, we remain on the lookout for new partners to join us in our efforts. If you have friends or colleagues at companies or organizations that you think would be interested in serving as Clean Air Coordinators or Employee Transportation Coordinators, please ask them to call (314) 645-5505, ext. 1007 or send an e-mail to [sfuchs@breathehealthy.org](mailto:sfuchs@breathehealthy.org) for information on how they can get involved.

### Mark Your Calendar

Following are a list of upcoming clean air/green-oriented events that you'll want to add to your calendar. You may even consider hosting some fun incentive-based promotions at your company to coincide with one of these events.

**August 5:** Presenting the Harvest, 7:00-9:00 p.m. at the Earthways Center

**August 17:** Cashing in on Home Comfort, 6:30-8:00 p.m. at the Earthways Center

**August 28-29:** LouFest Music Festival, Forest Park Central Field

**September 19:** Open Streets & Bike to Busch, 8:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. in downtown St. Louis

**September 21:** The Nature Conservancy Conservation Speaker Series, 7:00 p.m. at Schlafly Bottleworks in Maplewood with Eric Miller

**Through September 30:** Plastic Pot Recycling, 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. at the Missouri Botanical Garden

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