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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**CLEAN AIR PARTNERSHIP REMINDS AREA RESIDENTS TO REDUCE TRANSPORTATION FOOTPRINT**

**DURING SUMMER TRAVELS**

**St. Louis, May 30, 2019 . . .** Memorial Day marked the unofficial start of summer vacation season with a record number of drivers hitting the roads for the long holiday weekend. Families across the U.S. are gearing up for another season of travel and nearly 100 million Americans are planning to take a vacation this summer, according to the latest AAA travel survey. Whether your summer plans include a tropical getaway or cross-country road trip, it is important to keep in mind that traveling can negatively impact the environment.

“Fortunately, there are a variety of ways that area residents can reduce their environmental impact by making a few small changes to the way that we travel,” said Susannah Fuchs, Director, Clean Air for the American Lung Association in Missouri. “Each one of these choices makes a small difference in the big picture, but collectively, becoming more conscious about greening your travels can have a huge impact on the environment.”

With that in mind, the Clean Air Partnership suggests just a few of the many ways you can reduce your transportation footprint this summer to help improve the region’s air quality:

* **Travel Light** – Greener travel starts before we even leave the house. The more weight trains, planes, and automobiles have to carry, the more fuel they use, and the more harmful greenhouse gases are emitted into the atmosphere. As a result, these emissions have a negative impact on the climate – including worsened air quality – that pose many threats to human health. Be conscious of how much you are packing to lighten the load and help keep the air quality in healthy ranges.
* **Turn Off and Unplug** – While you may feel more comfortable leaving on a light or two in your absence, that doesn’t mean that you have to leave computers, tablets and other electrical devices on that still use electricity when plugged in, even though they may be idle. Do a walk-through of your home before you leave to turn off and unplug any unnecessary electronics because energy production is a key source of air pollution. Doing so will help clean the air by reducing harmful emissions!
* **Choose to Travel by Bus or Train** – If possible, consider traveling by bus or train to your destination. These are the greenest options and can offer a certain level of convenience, particularly if the weather and roads are bad along your travel route. If you must fly, check to see if you can get an affordable nonstop flight to help improve the air quality by cutting back on carbon emissions that come from takeoff and landing. Buses, trains, hybrid cars, and coach seats on narrow jets weigh in with the smallest carbon footprints.
* **Properly Maintain Your Vehicle** – If you are traveling by your own personal vehicle, routine maintenance steps like checking engine performance, keeping tires properly inflated, replacing air filters and changing oil regularly are all ways to help reduce emissions and fuel consumption, saving money at the pump and cleaning the air. Following the speed limit also saves fuel and prevents unnecessary air pollution.
* **Make Your Stay a Greener One** – If your travel plans include staying at a hotel, consider some simple practices to minimize energy use during your trip like taking short showers, turning off any lights or electronics before leaving the room, keeping the thermostat at a reasonable temperature, and reusing sheets and towels instead of having them washed and changed every day. Otherwise, plan on staying with friends or family to cut back on cost and reduce energy use.

A few small changes are all it takes to help ensure we all breathe easier during the busiest travel time of the year. For more tips, visit [www.cleanair-stlouis.com](http://www.cleanair-stlouis.com), like us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter at @gatewaycleanair.

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***About the Clean Air Partnership***

The Clean Air Partnership was formed in 1995, led by the American Lung Association, St. Louis Regional Chamber and Growth Association, East-West Gateway Council of Governments, Washington University and others, to increase awareness of regional air quality issues and to encourage activities to reduce air pollution emissions.