

Air Quality Program History

The City of La Grande established an Air Quality Program in 1991 in response to the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) finding that within the City's Urban Growth Boundary the air exceeded the National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS). Air sampling conducted 1988 had determined that particulate matter less than 10 microns (PM₁₀) concentration exceeded the 24-hr NAAQS and that a State Implementation Plan (SIP) describing strategies to restore healthful air quality was necessary.

The Air Quality Commission was a natural outgrowth of the need to develop the framework for a plan to restore healthful air quality. The basic premise under which the Commission was formed was that good quality air is a valuable resource, important to public health and the economic well being of the community. The Commission is responsible for providing recommendations to the City Council regarding air quality management in the City of La Grande. The Commission is also responsible for the implementation of the SIP, which entails encouraging wood burning curtailment and making wood burning advisories available to the public.

Public education plays an important part in the commission's mandate. Every year the Commission develops and presents an extensive 6th grade air quality education program for local schools. This program reaches approximately 150 children each year. In addition, the Commission participates in local events to present air quality information to the public. This year, the Commission sponsored the DEQ in conducting a remote sensing survey of vehicle emissions. Approximately 9,000 vehicles participated, one of the highest turnouts in the state.