



Downwinders *at risk*

reducing toxic air pollution in north texas

Applicant Information Form Sue Pope North Texas Pollution Reduction Program

Organization:	North Central Texas Council of Governments
Organization type	Non-Profit / Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)
Organization Street Address:	616 Six Flags Drive Centerpoint Two
City, State, Zip	Arlington, TX 76011

Project Officer (Title, First, MI, Last, Suffix):		Transportation Planner Wei Wei Cham			
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Project Name		Air North Texas: Regional Air Quality Public Awareness Campaign - Program Quantification & Feasibility Study			
Location of Project		North Central Texas Ozone Nonattainment Area			
Project Start Date (MM/DD/YYYY)		10/01/2009			
Project End Date (MM/DD/YYYY)		10/31/2011			

BUDGET: Please summarize your budget request in the space provided. You should also provide a more detailed budget in your preproposal.

Line Item	Requested Funds	Matching Funds
Salaries and Benefits		\$50,000
Equipment		
Other:	\$100,000	
Total:	\$100,000	\$50,000

PROJECT NAME

Air North Texas:
Regional Air Quality Public Awareness Campaign – Program Quantification & Feasibility Study

PROJECT MANAGER

Wei Wei Cham
Transportation Planner
North Central Texas Council of Governments
817-608-2377
wcham@nctcog.org

TOTAL PROJECT COST

\$150,000 Total (\$100,000 Requested Funds + \$50,000 Matching Funds)

PROJECT PERIOD

Start Date: October 2009
End Date: October 2011

SUMMARY STATEMENT

Public involvement and outreach efforts are key elements to building strong community support and advocacy to achieve significant improvements in air quality and public health. Across the nation, environmental movements are rapidly growing in popularity due to the problems associated with air quality degradation and the urgency of sustainability initiatives. The main objective of an air quality public awareness campaign on a regional level is to provide an all-inclusive program that ensures full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in the North Central Texas ozone nonattainment area. In order to determine the effectiveness and efficiency of program efforts in public awareness, measurable results are important. Outcomes derived from campaign activities will need to be evaluated and assessed through the analysis of information gathered from multiple sources, predominantly the general public.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Air North Texas is a regional air quality public awareness campaign focused on promoting environmental awareness, action and advocacy, initiated by the North Central Texas Council of Governments. The program is a recent recipient of the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Clean Air Excellence Awards for outstanding innovative efforts to help make progress in achieving cleaner air through education and outreach. The collaborative effort involves an Air Quality Public Relations Task Force, which consists of representatives from the public, private and non-profit sectors. For partners, Air North Texas is a central platform to network and leverage existing resources, services and program strengths to continue growing efforts in promoting increased awareness and behavioral changes that will motivate residents to make clean air choices. For the general public, Air North Texas is an open avenue to stay informed about the region's air quality condition and to get involved in making active improvements in the air we breathe.

As an integrated public awareness campaign, Air North Texas offers a comprehensive air quality resource, which combines print, Internet, radio and non-traditional communication outlets (such as gasoline pumptoppers at refueling locations) to inform residents and encourage them to make clean air choices. Additionally, Air North Texas consistently promotes campaign efforts through various outreach opportunities. Outreach efforts performed are regularly grassroots in nature, allowing air quality experts to interact directly with residents and the community. Events held are typically open to the public, targeting groups of all demographics. Print publications and online material are produced in English and will soon incorporate more Spanish-language elements. Several media elements including print, television, radio and public service announcements promoting specific air quality commitment messages have been created in both English and Spanish to reach a larger audience.

The campaign Web site, www.airnorthtexas.org remains the campaign's main medium of communication to the public, housing not only basic air quality facts but is also a point source for all other air-quality related programs including 1) Try Parking It, an alternative commute solutions program, 2) AirCheckTexas Drive a Clean Machine, a vehicle repairs and replacement program, 3) Regional Smoking Vehicle Program (RSVP), an emissions enforcement program, and 4) Clean Vehicle technologies, consisting of various programs that promote fuel-alternative and green vehicle options.

Engaging and retaining public interest is an on-going endeavor. To keep the Air North Texas message fresh and active, monthly Clean Air Mails and Air Pollution Watch and Warning Alerts are routinely sent out to individuals who have signed on received air quality information and tips. Additional elements include the development of a children's air quality education program that will incorporate academic curriculum that can be implemented in independent school districts in various cities and counties. On a higher education level, the campaign will also be promoted to university groups and student bodies.

Besides developing an aggressive outreach component to the program, the campaign assessment process is a crucial phase established to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness as well as identify new opportunities to enhance current implemented outreach strategies. At present, Web site traffic and visitor trends are monitored with Google Analytics. Ideally, surveys and focus groups will be utilized to gather quantitative and qualitative information on public opinion and overall program reception. Ultimately, funding received will aid in building stronger performance measures that can help grow the initiative and measure emission benefits.

CRITERIA

Achieving Key Reductions

Major life-threatening respiratory illnesses have long been attributed to air pollution. As a downwind for major point sources in Texas, the Dallas-Fort Worth (DFW) nine-county nonattainment area contributes to much of the health hazards suffered by thousands of residents in the region. Public involvement and outreach is an indirect form of achieving emissions reductions of criteria pollutants and hazardous/toxic air pollutants. Although quantitative outcomes of educational efforts can be challenging to determine and results are not easily obtained, the underlying connection between increased public awareness generated by information dissemination through outreach and behavioral changes in commuting and other driver habits that ultimately reduces ozone-forming pollution cannot be denied.

The longevity of changed and habitual behavior derived from successfully conveying the importance of committing to air quality improvement solutions in an individual's daily routine, which may possibly span a lifetime, can potentially contribute to long-term and significant nitrogen oxides (NOx) reductions.

Chart – 1.0

PROGRAM		NOx (lbs/day)	VOC (lbs/day)
AirCheckTexas Drive a Clean Machine		760	680
Try Parking It	Commute Modes Bike Transit Vanpool - Ride Vanpool - Drive Did not work Carpool – Ride Telework Center Carpool – Drive Telecommute Drive Alone Walk	4.81	6.13
Clean Vehicle Program		480	100

Note: AirCheckTexas emission credits were estimated by using data from December 2007 to June 2008 on replacement vehicles. Try parking it emission credits were based on January 2008 to December 2008 data. Clean Vehicle program credits are extracted from Dallas-Fort Worth 2009 State Implementation Plan document.

Existing programs promoted through Air North Texas have a proven track record of contributing to significant emissions reduction (ref: Chart – 1.0) In order to continue sustaining equal if not increased momentum in engaging the public, more efforts in studying improved strategies of outreach will need to occur. To determine the level of success contributed by current campaign strategies, it is crucial to constantly assess the public impact generated, refocusing when necessary and re-strategizing to carry efforts forward. Much of the successes garnered from many well-executed public outreach and education programs are credited to exhaustive and extensive researches and studies.

Data that can help build a stronger campaign can be collected in variety of ways. To obtain general public reception of Air North Texas, focus groups and random sample surveys are options to consider. Additionally, campaign efforts can be more accurately executed by establishing an understanding of human behavior through cognitive, emotional and social analysis. To track the feasibility of marketing and advertising avenues pursued to promote air quality messages, the program will utilize data gathered from Google Analytics for Web-based activities, and progress reports from consultants and advertising vendors for print mediums.

On the technical evidence spectrum, supplying science-based facts and data to keep issues visible will help build credibility, support transparency and foster public interest on air quality and the health impacts. By providing solid science-backed information, the campaign can build stronger public knowledge and informed opinion, which will in turn promote changed behavior, such as modifying commuting and other driver habits which will result to improved air quality conditions.

There is also great importance in building dialogue and engaging targeted groups, particularly through grassroots outreach efforts, focus group and surveys. To obtain the data necessary to showcase the feasibility of executed campaign activities, the program quantification and campaign strategy analysis activities will be performed routinely.

Besides focused efforts on grassroots public outreach, the use of the Internet, radio, TV and print materials is vital and will continue to foster increased awareness of the health effects of vehicular emissions. These actions may prove to be extremely effective in gaining wide support for the campaign and ensuring acceptance of the program's efforts to incorporate additional educational elements, improve traffic management, promote adoption of more efficient technologies and enhance inspection and enforcement.

Public Impact

Air North Texas has the potential to generate substantial public impact in fostering improved air quality conditions in the region. The concept behind the initiative is that through awareness, knowledge and understanding, targeted groups will voluntarily act to improve air quality and adopt behavioral changes that can promote the greatest overall longevity of NOx reductions. By focusing on the connection between major polluting sources and the negative health effects, particularly towards sensitive groups (children, the elderly and people with respiratory illnesses) the campaign seeks to not only raise awareness on a serious medical issue, but also strives provide resources that can empower, educate and encourage individuals to play an active role in bringing the region a step closer toward cleaner air. Additionally, campaign efforts will eventually be translated to reach non-English speaking communities.

In the current tough economic times, it is even more important to ensure that campaign efforts and resources are efficiently leveraged. The Air North Texas Web site, www.airnorthtexas.org, is a vital, cost-effective component of the campaign. It is a comprehensive resource for the general public and Air North Texas partners. Residents can sign up for Clean Air Mail, a monthly e-mail with air quality information and tips for reducing emissions, many of which carry cost-savings and environmental implications. Air Pollution Watch and Warning e-mails are also sent during ozone watch and warning days. Via the Web site, residents can access useful air quality tips and resources at their convenience. Partners, especially those with limited financial and staff, can download campaign materials that promote a consistent, regional air quality message to the community.

TARGET DATES AND MILESTONES *(subject to change based on award notification date)*

October – December 2009: Development – Program feasibility, quantification strategies and consultant procurement *(where applicable)*

January – May 2010: Implementation – Behavioral analysis studies, focus groups and random sample surveys

June – September 2010: Evaluation – Report and data analysis, scoring and performance measures interpretation, incorporate improvement strategies

Tasks will be performed through fiscal year 2011.

COLLABORATIONS OR PARTNERSHIPS

Air North Texas is currently comprised of a diverse group of stakeholders and representatives from across the region, the Air Quality Public Relations Task Force was formed in an effort to build a comprehensive resource for air quality awareness initiatives that strives to bridge, coordinate and simplify the region’s air quality message to the community. This mutually-rewarding partnership aims to assist in developing and implementing effective awareness campaign strategies, including how to deliver the message, identifying what has worked well in past initiatives and why, and sharing guidelines from successful campaigns. The partnership is further solidified through the Air North Texas Partner Agreement, which is a non-binding mutual expression of cooperation to support principles and missions of the initiative. The partnership is constantly growing and currently comprised of 19 entities.

Regional Partners

- AskMeAboutGreen.com
- City of Arlington
- City of Dallas
- City of Denton
- City of Fort Worth
- City of Grand Prairie
- City of Mesquite
- City of Plano
- Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART)
- Denton County Transportation Authority (DCTA)
- Fort Worth Transportation Authority (The T)
- North Central Texas Council of Governments
- North Texas Clean Air Coalition (NTCAC)
- Parker County
- Tarrant County
- Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) - Dallas
- Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) - Fort Worth
- U.S. Green Building Council North Texas Chapter
- University of Texas at Arlington

COST-SHARING OR MATCHING

Staff time for project coordination and facilitation will be provided by NCTCOG as matching funds.

NCTCOG Administration and Staff Time	\$50,000
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