



NOAA



UTAH DEPARTMENT OF
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

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Kickoff events: Collaborative study of unusually high ozone pollution events in rural Utah

On Tuesday, Feb. 7, Utah officials, NOAA scientists and colleagues will kick-off a collaborative project to study ozone pollution in Utah's Uintah Basin to better understand why ozone levels occasionally soar above health-based standards in the winter. Data collected by NOAA, Utah's Department of Environmental Quality and many other partner institutions can support state and local efforts to prevent the poor air quality events or lessen their impact.

At high concentrations, ground-level ozone can cause severe respiratory problems in some people, and it damages crops, trees and other vegetation. Last winter, surface ozone pollution levels periodically rose to nearly two times the federal health standard. Oil and gas exploration and production and other activities in and around the Uintah Basin may contribute to the pollution episodes, which have occurred only when stable weather patterns called inversions trap cold air close to snow-covered ground.

WHAT: Uintah Basin Winter Ozone Study Kick-Off Events (Vernal, Utah)

WHEN: Feb. 7, 2012, 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. MT

WHERE: **Press Conference (10-11 a.m.):** 320 N. Aggie Boulevard, Uintah Conference Center in main building. Speakers will include study partners, health and elected officials from the region. A launch of a balloon – similar to those used to carry air-monitoring instruments – will follow.

Community Open House (5-7 p.m.): Bingham Research Center, 320 N. Aggie Boulevard, Uintah Conference Center in main building. Posters, information kiosks and more from organizations involved in the Uintah Basin ozone study.

WHO: Scientists and officials with NOAA, the Environmental Protection Agency, Utah Department of Environmental Quality, Utah State University, and the Tri-County Health Department

More information about this project, which includes nearly 50 scientists from NOAA, the Cooperative Institute for Research in Environmental Sciences, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Utah Department of Environmental Quality, Utah State University, the Western Energy Alliance (an oil and gas industry association) and more, can be found by visiting http://www.deq.utah.gov/Issues/uinta_basin/index.htm.

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