

MEDIA RELEASE

Canton City Health Department

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

U.S. EPA Re-Designates Canton-Massillon Area as Attainment with the National Ambient Air Quality Standard for Fine Particulate Matter

On October 22, 2013, U.S. EPA officially re-designated the Canton-Massillon (Stark County) area as attainment for the 1997 annual and 2006 24-hour Fine Particulate Matter (PM_{2.5}) National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS).

The Canton City Health Department, Air Pollution Control Division is responsible to operate and maintain an ambient air quality monitoring network to measure the air quality in Stark County for fine particulate matter, as well as other pollutants.

According to Air Pollution Control Division Administrator, Terri Dzienis, the county has been measuring healthy levels of PM_{2.5} since 2008. The last time the agency recorded an annual average above the standard was 2007 and the last time the agency recorded a 24-hour average above the standard was 2008. Dzienis also states "the designation of attainment is significant for several reasons: First, it confirms that the air quality in the Canton-Massillon area has improved and we meet the health standard for fine particulate. Second, this designation clears the path forward for new industrial sources that wish to build in the area. We are pleased with this approval by USEPA. Now Stark County is in attainment for all air pollutant NAAQS."

The main reasons for the improvement are due to the reduction of emissions from the refinery, other industrial facilities and mobile sources, including cars, trucks and cleaner fuels.

PM_{2.5} is a mixture of microscopic solids and liquid droplets suspended in air and is made up of a number of components, including acids (such as nitrates and sulfates), organic chemicals, metals, and soil or dust particles.

Health studies have shown a significant association between exposure to fine particles and premature death from heart or lung disease. Fine particles can aggravate heart and lung diseases and have been linked to effects such as: cardiovascular symptoms; cardiac arrhythmias; heart attacks; respiratory symptoms; asthma attacks and bronchitis. These effects can result in increased hospital admissions, emergency room visits, absences from school or work, and restricted activity days. Individuals who may be particularly sensitive to fine particle exposure include people with heart or lung disease, older adults and children.

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