

NEWS RELEASE

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June 30, 2020

MDAQMD'S 2020 EXCHANGE PROGRAM SMASHES RECORDS STIHL partnership proves successful: Funding exhausted in 3 months

Mojave Desert residents jumped at the chance to own a new piece of STIHL equipment this spring, setting incredible records and making sweeping reductions to local air pollution. The inaugural year of the Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District's partnership with STIHL for the District's lawn and garden equipment exchange program exceeded all expectations:

- Among the more than 700 total units that residents exchanged, approximately 350 were lawnmowers, 215 trimmers and 235 blowers.
- The total units exchanged in 2020 is an approximately 157-percent increase over the previous record for a District equipment exchange program;
- Approximately 42,700 pounds (more than 21 tons) of annual emissions were removed based on the exchange of gas-powered lawn mowers alone;
- Seven dealer locations across the MDAQMD jurisdiction facilitated the exchanges;
- More than 130 units were exchanged in Blythe, the first time that community has participated in an MDAQMD exchange;
- MDAQMD's grant-funding allowance saved residents an average off the retail price of \$105 per piece of equipment exchanged

Established in 2020, the MDAQMD and STIHL partnership began on April 1 for residents to trade in, at their convenience, their gas-powered lawn equipment for new battery-electric, zero-emission equivalents. MDAQMD's Mobile Source Emission Reductions Program funded the pilot and the District's Grants Section administered the program.

The three-month program far exceeds the number of past District equipment exchanges, which were held as annual single-day events. Before 2020, the record came in 2019 with 272 total pieces exchanged.

"We were blown away by the turnout and the willingness of residents who participated in this year's program," said Brad Poiriez, MDAQMD's Executive Director and Air Pollution Control Officer. "It's encouraging to know that there continues to be a demand out there for these items, which significantly reduce local emissions."

According to EPA statistics, gas-powered mowers contribute 5% of U.S. air pollution and estimates indicate more than 17 million gallons of fuel, mostly gasoline, is spilled each year while refueling lawn equipment. That's more than all the oil spilled by the Exxon Valdez in the Gulf of Alaska. A full analysis of the 2020 pilot will better dictate how the District proceeds with the exchange program in the coming years.

MDAQMD is the air pollution control authority and permitting agency for the High Desert portion of San Bernardino County and the Palo Verde Valley in Riverside County. It's governed by a board of 13 members representing nine incorporated municipalities and two counties within its boundaries.

MOJAVE DESERT AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

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