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## **-PUBLIC INFORMATION RELEASE-**

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### **Lake County Ranked 2nd in the Nation for Clean Air by the American Lung Association**

The American Lung Association (ALA) released its annual State of the Air 2016 Report. State and local area air quality are graded on an A through F scale by comparing local ozone and small-particulate concentrations with the federal air quality standards. Although many areas, especially within California, were given failing grades, Lake County passed with flying colors.

Lake County received a “C” grade for Ozone, an “A” grade for short term particulate pollution, and is ranked the **2nd Cleanest County in the Nation** for annual particulate average concentrations. Lake County did not change significantly from our annual averages, but last year’s number 2 County, Custer, South Dakota, made significant reductions in their particulate levels. Out of California’s 58 counties, Lake County is 1 of only 9 counties in California that did not have any days of particulate matter exceeds from 2012 through 2014. This impressive record has been documented by continuous air quality monitoring, which showed that fine particulate in the air never exceeded allowable levels during that time.

The report presents data showing what the residents of Lake County actually are breathing on a daily basis. It does not exclude wildfire impacts or other natural events that may be excluded when determining our attainment status. The ozone grade of “C” is the result of wildfire impacts. Over the past three years, we have only experienced marginal ozone levels 3 different times. This shows that despite the Wye, Walker, Scotts, and other fires through 2014, the residents of Lake County overall still enjoy some of the cleanest air in the Nation.

The ALA grades are the latest recognition of a long history of air quality accomplishments in Lake County. Strong local support for clean air measures has enabled the county to comply in full with not only the Federal Clean Air Standards, but also with the more rigorous California Standards for ozone and other air pollutants for the past 25 consecutive years. No other Air District in California can match that record.

Douglas Gearhart, Air Pollution Control Officer of the Lake County Air Quality Management District, attributes the success of the program to strong community support, cooperation of local Agencies, Fire Protection Districts, CalFire, the agricultural community, industry, the District Board of Directors, and to the dedication and hard work of AQMD staff. “The second cleanest county in the Nation for Particulate Matter is a significant indicator of the hard work and dedication this community has to maintaining a healthful environment. Even with the drought and wildfires of recent years, we can still enjoy a deep breath of Lake County Clean Air.”