

## Nevada County Transportation Commission

The Nevada County Transportation Commission (NCTC) is the Regional Transportation Planning Agency for Nevada County. NCTC coordinates state and federal transportation programs for Nevada County, the City of Grass Valley, Nevada City, and the Town of Truckee.

### 2012 NCTC Commissioners

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**Dan Miller**  
Grass Valley City Council

**Ed Scofield, Vice Chairman**  
Nevada County District II Supervisor

## This Newsletter is Prepared by the Staff of the Nevada County Transportation Commission

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The Nevada County Transportation Commission Newsletter is published quarterly. If you would like to be added to the mailing list, please write or call the Nevada County Transportation Commission office.

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### Upcoming NCTC Meeting

The next regular meeting of the Nevada County Transportation Commission is scheduled on: **Wednesday, May 16, 2012 at 9:30 a.m.**, in the **Nevada City Council Chambers, 317 Broad Street, Nevada City, CA.**

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101 Providence Mine Road, Suite 102  
Nevada City, CA 95959



# NEVADA COUNTY TRANSPORTATION UPDATE

Issue 51

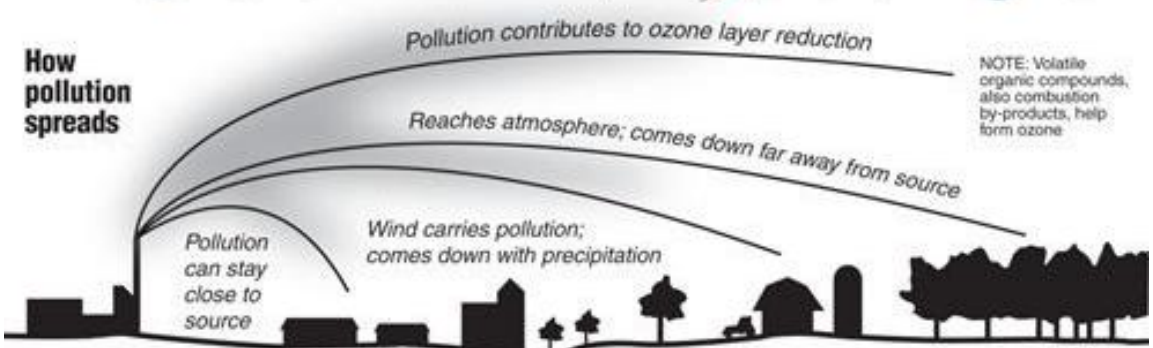
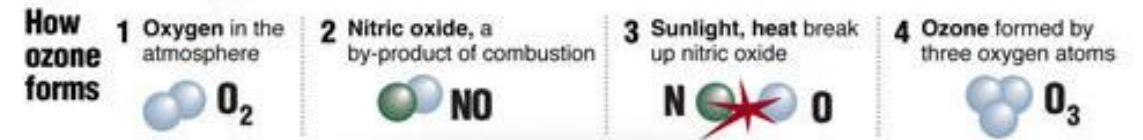
March 2012

## Keeping Western Nevada County A Separate Federal Ozone Area

In June 2004 western Nevada County was classified as a separate "non-attainment" area for ozone standards by a federal law that was established to maintain health-based air quality standards. "Ozone" is a harmful gas in smog that is invisible. It is formed when oxides of nitrogen chemically react with volatile organic compounds in the presence of heat and sunlight. Ozone is continually being formed and destroyed in the lower atmosphere. The process is not fully understood, and hundreds of natural and man-made compounds are involved. In the summer the balance tips toward the rapid formation and preservation of ozone molecules. Maximum ozone concentrations generally occur some distance downwind from the source of precursors. The primary source of Nevada County's ozone pollution is from the broader Sacramento area and, to a small degree, the San Francisco Bay area. The swath of land between the Sacramento area and western Nevada County's monitor is sparsely populated, with no significant emission sources. The topography of the Sierra Nevada Foothills features river canyons more than a thousand feet deep, which function to segment the flow of ozone from the Sacramento Valley and make it virtually impossible to model. Although ozone monitoring demonstrates a clear pattern of transport from the Sacramento region when wind is out of the southwest, daily maximum concentrations of ozone show a downward trend. Therefore, it is believed that western Nevada County can reach attainment at an earlier date than the Sacramento nonattainment area, and the county would qualify for a lower classification. The California Clean Air Act requires that areas reach attainment as expeditiously as practicable. Combining western Nevada County with Sacramento would potentially delay attainment for Nevada County.

### Ozone pollution can travel far

Ozone is one of the most widespread and dangerous air pollutants. Scientists say it can travel long distances on high altitude winds.



• Ozone layer found high in upper atmosphere is beneficial because it shields us from the sun's ultraviolet radiation.  
• Ozone air pollution at ground level where we can breathe it; causes serious health problems

Source: The Visual Guide to Understanding Climate and the Environment, American Lung Association

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The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) indicated in May 2011 they were considering changing boundaries of nonattainment areas and grouping Nevada County with Sacramento. Realistically it is impossible for Nevada County to reach attainment without Sacramento improving. However, if the two areas were grouped as one, this would result in a heavier regulatory burden on Nevada County, with negligible air quality benefits. Businesses in Nevada County would have the same requirements as those in Sacramento, but are not contributors to the problem. This would have a financial impact on the county's private sector. It could also deter new businesses from opening in Nevada County in order to avoid burdensome controls. Sacramento has developed regulations for over one hundred source

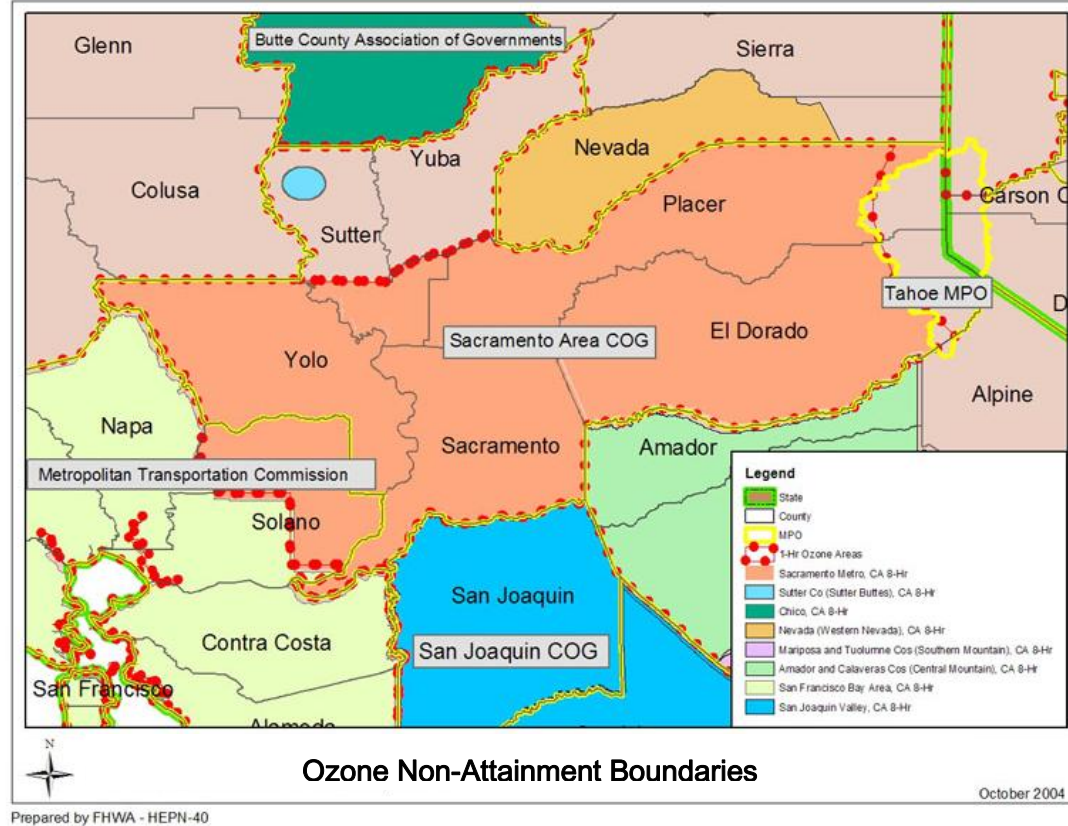
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## Federal Ozone Designation (cont'd.)

categories, such as bakeries, coffee roasters, residential water heaters, wineries, and residential wood combustion. Most of the measures that the Sacramento area has or could adopt in the future would have essentially no effect in reducing ozone concentrations if implemented in western Nevada County; either they are impractical for our area or the source categories are exceedingly small. If the stricter standards were not met in Nevada County, it could possibly delay or add restrictions to the use of federal funds on transportation projects in the county. Nevada County has a separate Air Pollution Control District that will develop and implement control strategies commensurate with local emissions and endeavor to attain the federal ozone standards.

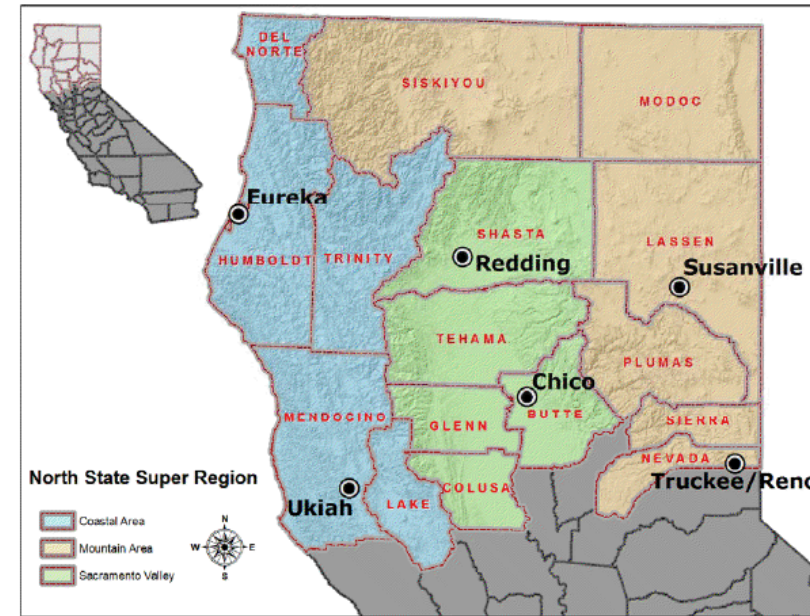
Two Nevada County Supervisors, Ed Scofield and Ted Owens, along with Gretchen Bennett, Air Pollution Control Officer from the Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District (NSAQMD), and Executive Director Daniel Landon of the Nevada County Transportation Commission (NCTC) met with the California Air Resources Board (CARB) staff who supported the county's position to keep our nonattainment designation separate from Sacramento. To combine Nevada County with the Sacramento area would make it even more difficult for Nevada County to meet reasonable further progress. Many air districts throughout the nation would likely find themselves in a similar situation. CARB wrote a letter to the U. S. EPA explaining that west coast geography and climate cause upwind issues with ozone and standards should be set differently on the west coast than the way they set east coast standards.



On June 29 and 30, 2011 Daniel Landon, Ed Scofield, Ted Owens, and Consultant John Dunlap made a trip to Washington, D.C. to meet with the U.S. EPA and legislators regarding the proposed changes to air quality standards. John Dunlap is a former Chairman of the CARB and he brought credibility and knowledge of the overall workings and issues to the meetings. They met with Janet McCabe, Chief Deputy of the U.S. EPA Office of Air and Radiation. She commented that the group's presentation was timely and their depth of discussion indicated they understood the issues. Ms. McCabe's technical staff in North Carolina, who are tasked with developing the new policies, were on the phone during the meeting and the Nevada County participants' comments and concerns were well received. Staff from Region 9 of the EPA in San Francisco also participated in the conference call. The group from western Nevada County also met with Congressmen McClintock's and Herger's offices, and Senators Boxer's and Inhofe's offices, both of which are on the Committee on Environment and Public Works who review and implement EPA changes.

On December 9, 2011 the U.S. EPA sent a letter to California's Governor Brown stating they considered California's ozone designation recommendations, as well as relevant technical information, and they had made a preliminary decision to designate 16 areas of California as non-attainment under the 2008 National Ambient Air Quality Standards. The enclosure with the letter indicated that western Nevada County would maintain a separate designation as a non-attainment area. A key issue mentioned in the decision was the burden new standards would cause on rural economies. Executive Director Landon thought their trip to Washington, D.C. had bearing on the EPA decision since most of the information they delivered to EPA was included in the attachment to the letter sent to Governor Brown. The EPA said they are committed to working with the states to share the responsibility of reducing ozone-forming air pollution and they will protect public health in communities across the country. Their preliminary designation decisions and supporting documentation were made available to the general public for review, and additional input on the recommendations was to be submitted by February 29, 2012. The EPA plans to implement final ozone designations in the spring of 2012. **NCTC**

## North State Super Region



Three subareas were designated by the consulting team for purposes of the study

The consulting team characterized the NSSR in the study as consisting of three general subareas (see map above):

1. Coastal Area – made up of Lake, Mendocino, Trinity, Humboldt, and Del Norte Counties;
2. Sacramento Valley – made up of Shasta, Tehama, Butte, Glenn, and Colusa Counties;
3. Mountain Area – made up of Siskiyou, Modoc, Lassen, Plumas, Sierra, and Nevada Counties.

The team will provide a Super Region perspective, but the data, findings, and recommendations will be broken down by individual counties. The report will include a series of project, policy, and program recommendations for collaboration between the transportation and economic development communities that will yield the greatest economic benefit. The focus will be on how transportation planning can assist the local economy. **NCTC**

## NCTC To Receive STIP Funds

The California Transportation Commission (CTC) will adopt the 2012 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) at their March 28-29, 2012 meeting. The CTC staff recommends that all projects submitted by NCTC be programmed for funding as requested (see December 2011 NCTC newsletter for details). NCTC staff believes that CTC staff were able to make these recommendations based on the fact that NCTC had "banked" their shares in previous STIP cycles and therefore had a significant balance to be programmed. Also, NCTC has focused their priority on state highway safety projects, therefore the CTC staff were able to recommend programming more than NCTC's target shares for the preliminary work on improving SR 49 from La Barr Meadows Road to McKnight Way.

Nevada County will receive \$10.555 million from the 2010 STIP, and \$3.6 million additional funds from the 2012 STIP for construction funding of the Dorsey Drive Interchange in July 2012. In FY 2014/15 the SR 89 Mousehole is scheduled to receive \$1.3 million in STIP funds for construction. The SR 49 La Barr Meadows Road to McKnight Way Improvement Project is programmed to receive \$3 million in FY 2015/16 and \$3 million in FY 2016/17. The funds in FY 15/16 will be used to define the scope, cost, and schedule of the next SR 49 improvement project, and to complete the environmental documents. Funds in FY 16/17 will be used to prepare plans, specifications, and estimates for the project. **NCTC**

## Reauthorization of Federal Transportation Bill

The last federal transportation bill, the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), expired in September 2009, but has been extended with Congress passing continuing resolutions. The most recent (eighth) continuing resolution extends the bill through March 2012. Both the Senate and the House of Representatives have developed bills in an attempt to get a reauthorization bill that can be approved by Congress and ultimately signed by the President before the end of March. Both bills focus on consolidating programs to provide increased flexibility, streamlining project delivery, and do not include earmarks. However, like previous surface transportation bills, the issue of how to adequately fund them is once again a major hurdle. Both the Senate and House committed to finding the necessary funding from other means rather than raising the federal gasoline tax, which has not been increased since 1993. If the March 31<sup>st</sup> deadline cannot be achieved, Congress will be faced with having to pass another continuing resolution to extend the previous federal transportation bill. **NCTC**