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Press Release

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

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DEC launches Burn Wise Alaska

(JUNEAU, AK) – The Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation is pleased to announce the Burn Wise Alaska campaign. Under the slogan “Burn Wise, Breathe Easy” the campaign is intended to help wood burners understand how best to burn wood as a heat source while saving money and reducing the harmful effects of wood smoke. The campaign includes public service announcements, print announcements, a website, social media outreach and other educational materials.

Burning wood effectively can save money if the right wood is burned, the right way, in the right stove. Wood that has been properly split, stacked and stored will have a lower moisture content, requiring less wood to be burned for the same heat output. In addition, dry wood burns more cleanly, reducing air pollution from the stack. Use of an EPA-certified woodstove will ensure a more complete combustion and further reduce wood smoke.

Burners should be aware of health issues associated with wood, as it is not a clean fuel compared to natural gas or home heating oil. Wood smoke contains very fine particulate matter less than 2.5 micrograms in size, known as PM2.5. Exposure to PM2.5 can cause coughing, scratchy throat, irritated sinuses, shortness of breath, chest pain, headaches, stinging eyes, and runny nose. Those who have heart or lung disease might experience chest pain, rapid heartbeat, shortness of breath, and fatigue. Smoke may worsen symptoms for people who have pre-existing respiratory conditions, such as respiratory allergies, asthma, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

The Burn Wise website provides information on wood moisture, the harmful effects of wood smoke and what actions burners can take to burn more cleanly while saving money and limiting pollution. The website has a number of short videos, as well as posters, brochures and other information on proper wood burning. Wood sellers may sign up to a voluntary wood moisture disclosure program, where they will be recognized by DEC for providing consumers documentation on the moisture content of their wood. The program is free and offered statewide to wood sellers.

Burn Wise outreach materials, videos and educational information can be found at <http://burnwise.alaska.gov/>.

Follow Burn Wise on Twitter at: <https://twitter.com/BurnWiseAlaska>.

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