



Contact: **Bernice Cage**
Tel.: 614-233-4157
Cell Phone: 614-626-1117
Email: bcage@morpc.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

2015 Ozone Season ends with better Air Quality yet tighter Ozone Standards

(Columbus, OH – December 8, 2015) The Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) is part of a network of agencies across the country that issues daily air quality forecasts and notifies the public when ozone and particle pollution levels are considered to be unhealthy for sensitive groups of people. From April through October, ground-level ozone levels peak when warm temperatures and sunlight, mixed with pollutants, enhance the formation of ozone. This can create unhealthy levels of air pollution triggering Air Quality Alerts.

MORPC recently released the *End of Season* report for Central Ohio. Issued by Sonoma Technology, Inc., the report provides a summary for the 2015 ozone season and compares it to the last two ozone seasons. Air quality in the Columbus region during the 2015 summer season was slightly better than in the 2013 and 2014 summer seasons despite temperatures being warmer than normal. In 2015, MORPC issued only two Air Quality Alerts on May 8 and July 29 which forecasted pollution at levels unhealthy for sensitive groups of people such as children, the elderly, and persons with breathing disorders such as asthma.

“Lower levels of ozone pollution despite warmer temperatures during the 2015 ozone season points to decreased emissions levels in the region,” states Evelyn Ebert, MORPC Air Quality Program Supervisor. “This means that federal programs designed to address emissions, as well as local efforts by our air quality partners in the region, are working. The result of these lowered emissions means that Central Ohio is on track to meet the new strengthened ozone standard.”

Despite improvements, the region remains in nonattainment for the 2008 8-hour ozone standard. In an effort to protect human health and the environment, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on October 1, 2015, issued a new National Ambient Air Quality Standard for ground-level ozone from 75 parts per billion (ppb) to 70 ppb. Recent preliminary data, which indicates an average of 71 ppb for the last three years, puts Central Ohio close to meeting this tighter standard.

To sign up for Air Quality Alerts or to view the *End of Season* report visit <http://airquality.morpc.org>.

-30-

Working to Build a Better Region

111 Liberty Street, Suite 100
Columbus, Ohio 43215-5222
Phone (614) 228-2663 Fax (614) 621-2401
www.morpc.org

The Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) is a voluntary association of local governments and regional organizations which envisions and embraces innovative directions in economic prosperity, energy, the environment, housing, land use, and transportation. Our transformative programming, services and innovative public policy are designed to promote and support the vitality and growth in the region.