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## News Release

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### **Oklahoma in Attainment of Current Ozone Standard**

Oklahoma remains in attainment of the National Ambient Air Quality Standard for ozone at the conclusion of the 2014 ozone season. Attainment of the standard is based on the average of the fourth highest three-year value at each monitoring site. Drought and high temperatures during the 2011 and 2012 ozone seasons led to exceedances of the standard at monitors across the state. The 2013 and 2014 ozone seasons have been dramatically better.

“Based on the latest three-year average, all ozone monitoring sites are back in attainment with the current standard,” said Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality Executive Director Scott Thompson. “As many as half of the state’s air quality monitors will likely set all-time record low ozone statistics this year.”

While the control of emissions within Oklahoma contributed to these lower readings, other factors such as weather, fewer wildfires and less demand for electricity also played a major role.

The standard for ozone is set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). EPA is currently engaged in the mandated five-year review cycle for determining whether the ozone standard should be revised. In April, EPA was ordered by the U.S. District Court to propose a revised standard by December 1, 2014, and finalize the standard by October 1, 2015. Scientific studies have shown that humans experience harmful effects from ozone exposure at much lower levels than the current standard.

All indications are that the standard will be lowered to a value in a range of 0.060 to 0.070 parts per million. If a lower standard within this range is proposed, Oklahoma will have significant difficulties meeting this new standard at most, if not all, ozone monitors across the state.

The Oklahoma City and Tulsa metropolitan areas have submitted Ozone Advance plans that are designed to encourage voluntary reductions in emissions of ozone precursors. Assuming a new lower standard, these plans are only the beginning of the new strategies that may be necessary to keep Oklahoman’s metropolitan areas in compliance in the next round of designations.

To learn more about ozone, please visit <http://www.deq.state.ok.us/aqdnw/>

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