

Madison, Jersey, St. Louis County Receive Poor Grades In Ozone Pollution Ratings

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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ST. LOUIS -The St. Louis area avoided the top 25 most ozone-polluted cities list for the seventh consecutive year but still receives poor grades for overall air quality in a spring release by the American Lung Association. Madison and Jersey County both had low marks in the American Lung Association's latest "State of the Air" report.

Nearly 36 percent of Americans – 119.6 million people – still live in places with failing grades for unhealthy levels of ozone or particle pollution.

Madison County received an F grade, while Jersey and St. Clair County came in with a C grade.

St. Charles County also was graded with an F and St. Louis city recorded a D grade.

“It’s encouraging to see that St. Louis has once again escaped the list of the most ozone-polluted cities with more counties in the bi-state area receiving a better grade in this year’s annual “State of the Air” report compared to last year,” said Susannah Fuchs, Director of Clean Air for the American Lung Association in Missouri. “However, there is still much work to be done to protect our local communities and constituents from the growing risks to public health as we prepare to settle into summer when we’re at greater risk for elevated levels of ozone pollution.”

For the seventh consecutive year, the St. Louis region escaped being ranked among the top 25 most ozone-polluted cities in the U.S., coming in at number 35 on the list out of 227 metropolitan areas.

The area ranked No. 27 on the list of most polluted cities by year-round particle pollution, which is back three spots from the previous year. The most up-to-date report findings have added to the evidence that a changing climate is making it harder to protect human health, with the three years included in this year’s report (2019-2021) ranking among the seven hottest years on record globally.

Here’s a look at the latest rankings for ozone pollution across the region for counties in the non-attainment area included in the American Lung Association’s [report](#):

Illinois

- Jersey - C
- Macoupin - A
- Madison - F
- St. Clair - C

Missouri

- Jefferson - D
- St. Charles - F
- St. Louis County - F
- St. Louis City - D

Fuchs said that actions like combining errands into a single trip, walking or biking for short trips instead of hopping in your car, not topping off your gas tank, avoiding vehicle idling, or opting for electric vehicles can significantly affect the amount of ozone-forming emissions on any given day and help people across the region breathe easier.

On the heels of last year's successful "Don't Pollute. Switch Up Your Commute." campaign launched by the Clean Air Partnership and more than half a dozen partners, area residents can still visit www.SwitchUpYourCommute.com to learn more about ways to modify their commuting behaviors and all the transportation options available on both sides of the Mississippi River – and links to associated schedules, pricing, programs, ride-matching services, incentives and more.

Area residents are also encouraged to visit the Clean Air Partnership's website at www.CleanAir-StLouis.com, where they can view a wealth of information on the health effects of poor air quality, tips for individuals to do their share for cleaner air, and contact the Clean Air Partnership with interest in receiving their monthly newsletter.

While on the site, individuals can also sign up to receive the daily forecast in their email inboxes via the Environmental Protection Agency's EnviroFlash air quality alert system, which states if the forecast for the following day is a GREEN (good), YELLOW (moderate), ORANGE (unhealthy for sensitive groups) or RED (unhealthy) air quality day. The projection for Thursday, June 1, 2023, is an Orange air quality.

Additional air quality information and the daily forecast can be accessed by liking the Clean Air Partnership on Facebook, or by following the organization on Twitter @gatewaycleanair.

To access the full American Lung Association 2023 "State of the Air" report, visit www.Lung.org.

About the American Lung Association

The American Lung Association is the leading organization working to save lives by improving lung health and preventing lung disease through education, advocacy, and research. The work of the American Lung Association is focused on four strategic imperatives: to defeat lung cancer; to champion clean air for all; to improve the quality of life for those with lung disease and their families; and to create a tobacco-free future. For more information about the American Lung Association, which has a 4-star rating from Charity Navigator and is a Platinum-Level GuideStar Member, or to support the work it does, call 1-800-LUNGUSA (1-800-586-4872) or visit: Lung.org.

About the Clean Air Partnership

The Clean Air Partnership was formed in 1995, led by the American Lung Association, St. Louis Regional Chamber and Growth Association, East-West Gateway Council of Governments, Washington University, and others, to increase awareness of regional air quality issues and to encourage activities to reduce air pollution emissions.