



*Put a cap on ozone!*

## **Gas Cap Replacement Program**

On June 15, 2000, the Regional Air Quality Council (RAQC) in conjunction with the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE), the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), Envirotest Systems Corporation, independent emissions testing stations and NAPA Auto Parts, launched a gas cap replacement program. This effort was initiated in conjunction with the RAQC's Voluntary Ozone Reduction Program during the summer of 2000.

Faulty or missing gas caps emit volatile organic compounds (VOCs), which in the presence of sunlight form ground level ozone pollution. Ozone pollution can cause breathing problems and respiratory infections in the elderly, young and those with pre-existing ailments. Even healthy people that exercise or work outdoors can experience breathing problems when exposed to elevated levels of ozone.

Evaporative gasoline emissions can account for up to 6 percent of VOC emissions on any given day in the Denver metropolitan area. This amounts to nearly three tons of air pollution per day. In the summer time, a faulty gas cap can cause a vehicle to lose a gallon of gas every 15 days.

The program gave free gas caps to any motorist whose vehicle failed its emission test because of a faulty or missing gas cap, at any Air Care Colorado testing stations or independent testing stations. Drivers whose vehicles require unusual or specialized gas caps not readily available at the testing facility were issued a voucher for a \$5 credit toward the purchase of the desired gas cap at any NAPA store in the metropolitan area.

At the end of the ozone season, approximately 9,500 gas caps had been replaced and nearly 3,000 gas cap vouchers had been handed out. Of those handed out, more than 1,200 vouchers were redeemed at area NAPA stores. This is estimated to reduce VOC emission by 660 pounds per day or nearly 2,300 trips between Denver and Boulder and back.

The State of Colorado recently implemented new requirements in the emissions testing procedure that fail vehicles which undergo an emissions test if their gas cap is not operating properly. Previously the gas cap test was an "advisory" test and not a pass/fail item. Motorists whose vehicle did not have a gas cap always have failed the emissions test. Implementation of the "Put a Cap on Ozone" program provided an opportunity to educate motorists about the health and regulatory benefits of properly-working gas caps as an ozone pollution control strategy.

"Put a Cap on Ozone" program was funded by CDOT and Envirotest Systems Corporation.

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