

## News Release

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**For Immediate Release**

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### More Air Quality Monitors for Southwest Nebraska

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) announces additional air monitors to be set up in the nine-county health district. Last year, in collaboration with the Nebraska Environmental Public Health Tracking Program, SWNPHD installed 4 air monitors in Keith, Red Willow, Chase, and Dundy counties. Five additional air monitors have been acquired and will be installed in the remaining counties of Perkins, Hayes, Hitchcock, Frontier, and Furnas by the end of April.

You can view the current air quality of your area by visiting our website [swhealth.ne.gov](http://swhealth.ne.gov) and going to the Environmental section. To view the air quality across the state, visit EPA's fire and smoke map at [fire.airnow.gov](http://fire.airnow.gov).

“These monitors are a significant step forward in our commitment to public health and environmental stewardship,” says Diana Garcia, Program Manager for SWNPHD. “The quality of your air can have a big impact on your health. No matter where you live, you can be exposed to air pollution.”

In southwest Nebraska, sources of air pollution can include vehicle exhaust, smoke, road dust, industrial emissions, pollen, gas-fueled yard equipment, and others. The new sensors will monitor one of the harmful components of air pollution from these sources: small particles referred to as PM 2.5. These particles are so small they can go deep into the lungs and cause health problems.

**Short-Term benefits** of monitoring air quality include:

1. **Real-time Data:** By providing real-time air quality information, these monitors allow us to respond swiftly to any sudden changes or pollution spikes. This means we can issue timely health advisories and take immediate action to protect our communities.
2. **Public Awareness:** By making air quality data accessible to the public, we empower residents to make informed decisions about their daily activities, especially those with respiratory conditions or other health vulnerabilities.
3. **Enhanced Research:** The data collected helps us identify pollution sources and patterns, enabling targeted interventions and more effective policies.

**Long-Term benefits** of monitoring air quality include:

1. **Improved Health Outcomes:** Continuous monitoring and timely interventions can lead to a reduction in respiratory diseases, ultimately improving the overall health and well-being of our communities. For instance, poor air quality is linked to emergency room visits for asthma attacks, with pollutants like ozone and fine particulate matter being significant triggers. Knowing and understanding air quality at any given time will help you make an informed decision about outdoor activities to help prevent an asthma attack.

2. **Environmental Protection:** Long-term data trends help us understand the impact of various pollutants and develop strategies to reduce emissions, contributing to a cleaner and healthier environment.
3. **Economic Savings:** By preventing health issues related to poor air quality, we can reduce healthcare costs and increase productivity, benefiting both individuals and the broader economy.

“These air monitors are not just tools for measuring air quality,” continues Garcia. “They are vital instruments for safeguarding public health, protecting our environment, and fostering a more informed and resilient community.”

For more information contact SWNPHD at 308-345-4223. Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department serves Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins, and Red Willow counties. The website [swhealth.ne.gov](http://swhealth.ne.gov) contains many resources and additional information helpful to prevent disease, promote and protect health. Follow us on Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube.

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