

2nd ozone warning goes out

By The Associated Press

DANIEL - Wyoming regulators issued an ozone advisory for Monday and Tuesday in the Upper Green River Basin in Sublette County, the second such warning for the area in two weeks.

Ozone is an air pollutant that can cause respiratory health problems and is usually considered an urban problem. This week's warning follows an ozone advisory issued for the same area on Feb. 27, which was the first in the state's history for ozone.

The Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality has said the cause of the elevated ozone levels is probably the area's intensive natural gas development.

The Upper Green River Basin in western Wyoming is in the midst of drastic transformation from a sparsely populated rural outpost to a heavily industrialized center for energy development.

Spokesman Keith Gullie said the department has been studying ozone in the basin since 2005. The study revealed that bright sunlight, low winds, snow cover and temperature inversions typically accompany higher ozone levels.

"When it looks like these conditions will be present, we'll be putting out these type of advisories," he said.

Monday's advisories, which were issued in conjunction with the state Department of Health, said elevated ozone levels can cause respiratory problems for people with existing problems, as well as for children or the elderly.

"Well, certainly when you talk about ozone, and the raised levels, it's just to alert people that may have some respiratory issues," Gullie said. "It's not that they shouldn't go outside, but if they have some kind of strenuous activity, we're asking them to rethink those strenuous activities."