



**Antelope Valley Mosquito  
& Vector Control District**  
42624 6<sup>th</sup> St. East  
Lancaster, CA 93535  
(661) 942 – 2917

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## **NEWS RELEASE**

– **For Immediate Release**

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**Contact:**

Karen Mellor, Entomologist  
[Karen@avmosquito.org](mailto:Karen@avmosquito.org)

### **Voters to Decide if they want to join the Battle of the Mosquitoes**

Lancaster, CA –With Memorial Day less than a week away most people are planning a BBQ or pool party and are preparing for nice warm evenings outdoors. That is, until mosquitoes come around to spoil all the fun. Unfortunately mosquitoes are not only a pesky nuisance that ruin a nice evening sitting outside any more, but they can transmit diseases like West Nile Virus (WNV), Western Equine and St. Louis Encephalitis.

Most residents within the city limits of Palmdale and Lancaster are currently receiving mosquito control services from the Antelope Valley Mosquito & Vector Control District. But there are a few areas on the Westside that are not receiving any kind of service at all. Those areas include most of Quartz Hill and Rancho Vista and the area west of 10<sup>th</sup> Street West between Avenues M and P.

On May 27<sup>th</sup> ballots will be mailed to all property owners in the area in question and they will have the opportunity to vote if they want to join the District. The ballots are due back on July 12<sup>th</sup> and a simple majority of the weighted ballots is considered a positive vote. If this measure is passed, the property owners in those areas will be charged a benefit assessment fee of \$6.40-\$9 (plus consumer price index) each year on their property tax bill, and will align them with the rest of their neighbors who are already in the District.

In 2004 there were a total of 830 West Nile virus infections reported from 23 counties in California with 28 fatalities. There have been no reports of human illness due to WNV in 2005, yet, but it has been detected in other animals in 21 California Counties. To date 65 dead birds have tested positive for WNV, with the closest ones to the AV being found in Rosamond, Edwards and Valencia.

New guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend the use of mosquito repellents containing DEET, picaridin or oil of lemon eucalyptus as excellent choices to keep mosquitoes away.

West Nile Virus is spread by mosquitoes, which feed on the blood of infected birds and then pass it on to humans or other animals. West Nile Virus is not spread by person-to-person contact or by handling dead birds. The dead bird surveillance is an early warning system for the range of the virus. The public is asked to help by reporting recently deceased birds (except for pigeons, doves and chickens) by calling 1-877-WNV-BIRD (877-968-2473) or online at [www.westnile.ca.gov](http://www.westnile.ca.gov). Birds that are not picked up by the end of the day can be safely discarded in the trashcan using gloves, a shovel or an inverted trash bag to handle them.

Because of the heavy rains this spring, there is a great deal of standing water throughout the valley that can be potential breeding places for mosquitoes. All citizens are urged to take individual responsibility for the protection of their families and animals.

Here are a few easy suggestions to reduce mosquitoes in your yard and your neighborhood:

- \* Make sure your sprinklers are set in a manner that will allow the ground to dry completely before the next cycle. Conserve water and prevent mosquito breeding.
- \* Get rid of standing water – Empty out all small containers at least once a week, keep pools and spas chlorinated or drained, and repair all water leaks.
- \* Get mosquito-eating fish (*Gambusia affinis*) for free, if you have sources that cannot be drained (e.g. fish ponds, pools, large horse troughs).
- \* Wear long sleeved shirts and pants and use CDC recommended mosquito repellents when outdoors during dusk and dawn. Always follow instructions on the product label.
- \* Keep tight fitting screens on doors and windows to prevent mosquitoes from entering homes.
- \* Horse owners should also make sure their horses are properly vaccinated.
- \* Report stagnant pools and other backyard sources to the AVMVCD.

For any further questions or services please feel free to contact the Antelope Valley Mosquito & Vector Control District by phone (661-942-2917) or check us out online at [www.avmosquito.org](http://www.avmosquito.org).