



**Antelope Valley Mosquito
& Vector Control District**
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NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Calling all 5th and 6th graders – Fight The Bite Poster Contest

Lancaster, CA – It is time for the national Fight The Bite Poster Contest. This contest encourages fifth and sixth grade students around the country to be creative and illustrate ways to protect themselves and their families from diseases that are spread by mosquitoes or ticks. They will need to find out more about mosquito control, personal protection against mosquitoes and ticks and things we all can do to be safe from these pesky blood suckers.

This contest is sponsored by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the DEET Education Program. Each grade level will have a Grand Prize winner, who will receive an award certificate and a \$1,000 check. A \$50 prize will also be awarded for fifth and sixth grade students in each State. As a special incentive this year the schools will receive a prize as well - \$250 for Grand Prize and \$50 for State winners. The deadline to enter this contest is April 18, 2012.

In 2009 the California winner for fifth grade was a local student from Tamarisk Elementary school in Palmdale. “We are sure there are many talented kids in the Antelope Valley, and we might have another local winner – maybe even a Grand Prize winner,” said District Entomologist Karen Mellor. “Now take out your art supplies and get creative.”

To get more information, including “Tips for Teachers” and “Helpful Hints” visit their website at www.fightthebitecontest.org. Teachers can schedule a presentation on mosquitoes and the diseases they carry by calling the Antelope Valley Mosquito & Vector Control District at 661-942-2917. Classroom materials and teacher resources about ticks from the California Department of Health can be found at www.cdph.ca.gov/HealthInfo/discond/Pages/DLTTBCurriculumforTeachers.aspx.

Mosquitoes are able to transmit West Nile Virus and other potentially deadly diseases. Although most people that are infected with West Nile Virus do not show any symptoms, it can be very debilitating for some. Even 'mild' cases of West Nile Fever can cause patients enormous pain and discomfort for months.

District officials urge residents to take individual responsibility, and remember the 3 D's protect yourself and your family from West Nile Virus:

- * DRAIN all standing water – Empty out small containers at least once a week, keep pools and spas chlorinated or drained, and repair all water leaks. Conserve water and prevent mosquito breeding.
- * DUSK and DAWN – are peak activity times for mosquitoes.
- * DEFEND yourself - wear long sleeved shirts and pants and use mosquito repellents containing DEET, Picaridin, Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus, or IR3535 when outdoors during mosquito activity. Always follow instructions on the product label. Keep tight fitting screens on doors and windows to prevent mosquitoes from entering homes.

Also remember to:

- * get FREE mosquito-eating fish (*Gambusia affinis*) for fish ponds, pools, and horse troughs.
- * vaccinate your horses properly.
- * report stagnant pools and other backyard sources to the AVMVCD.
- * report dead birds by calling 1-877-WNV-BIRD (877-968-2473) or online at www.westnile.ca.gov.

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.