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NEWS RELEASE

May 6, 2009

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HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS TO PRESENT AIR QUALITY RESEARCH AT UM

MISSOULA –

High school students from Montana, Idaho and Alaska will present their findings from air quality research projects at the fifth annual Air Toxics Under the Big Sky symposium Wednesday, May 20, at The University of Montana.

The symposium showcases student research projects that focus on indoor air quality and atmospheric chemistry. It is jointly hosted by UM's Center for Environmental Health Sciences and the Department of Chemistry.

The symposium kicks off at 9:30 a.m. in the North Underground Lecture Hall with a welcome and overview, followed by student presentations beginning at 9:55 a.m. An environmental health fair featuring student posters, interactive exhibits and displays from agencies and community organizations will be held from 2 to 3 p.m. in the Skaggs Building lobby. The public is invited to both events.

Some 250 high school science students, tribal college students and teachers have participated in Air Toxics Under the Big Sky during the 2008-09 academic year. Participants will attend the UM symposium from Big Sky, Hellgate, Corvallis and Libby high schools in

Montana; Kamiah and Lapwai high schools in Idaho; and Wasilla and Hoonah high schools in Alaska.

The goals of Air Toxics Under the Big Sky are to:

- provide mentoring opportunities for high school students to work alongside university scientists.
- measure concentrations of particulate matter to provide a picture of how these compounds vary seasonally and geographically.
- investigate particulate matter levels and their potential health effects.
- bring student-based scientific inquiry into the classroom.
- give students real-world science experience with problems relevant to their communities.
- encourage students to seek further education and careers in environmental and biomedical sciences.

For more information, visit <http://www.umt.edu/cehs/airtox.html>.

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