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**AMERICAN LUNG ASSOCIATION ISSUES STATE OF THE AIR REPORT:
MIXED GRADES FOR GEORGIA---ATLANTA IN TOP POLLUTED LISTS**

(Atlanta), May 1, 2008— The American Lung Association issued its annual report card on air pollution today, ranking cities most affected by three types of pollution: short-term particle pollution, year-round particle pollution and ozone pollution. For the first time ever, a city outside California, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, tops one of the most polluted lists in the ninth consecutive *American Lung Association State of the Air* report. Several cities across the country lost footing and slipped closer to the top of the list of most ozone-polluted cities, including San Diego, Atlanta, Charlotte and the Baltimore-Washington, D.C. metro area. Birmingham, Alabama, joined the list for the very first time, ranking at number 22 of most ozone-polluted cities.

Georgia cities ranked as follows:

- The Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Gainesville area moved back up the ranks of the most ozone-polluted cities list to 12th place from 25th place in the 2007 report. Atlanta tied with Charlotte, NC and San Diego, CA.
- Fulton County ranked as the 24th most ozone-polluted county, tied with Rowan County, NC and San Diego County, CA.
- The Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Gainesville area moved back into the ten worst cities for year-round particle pollution list at 6th place from 13th place in the 2007 report. Fulton County itself ranked 8th most polluted by year-round particles.
- The Macon-Warner Robins-Fort Valley area moved into the 25-most-polluted-cities list for the first time for year-round particle pollution, moving to 12th from 27th in 2007.
- Rome, GA, moved up the 25 worst list for year-round particle pollution to 19th from 24th in 2007, even though its year-round particle levels dropped slightly. The ranking suffered because other cities cleaned up more.
- Augusta-Richmond County also moved for the first time into the 25-most-polluted-cities list for year-round particle pollution moving to 21st from 35th in 2007.
- The Columbus-Auburn-Opelika area moved to a tie for the 25th most polluted for year-round particle pollution, It was also in the 25 worst list for the first time.
- Six of the 27 counties most polluted year-round by particles are in GA.

“Our lungs are one of the body’s primary defenses against assaults from our environment” said Gerald Staton, MD, a pulmonologist at Emory University School of Medicine and board member for the Association in the southeast. “The very young and old, those with asthma, lung and heart diseases are at the greatest risk” he said. “Ozone pollution is a respiratory irritant---like sunburn on the lungs,” said Staton, “and fine particle pollution is a danger because it can travel down to the most delicate part of the lungs, the tiny air sacks, and even pass into the blood stream. My patients with lung disease always have more trouble during the bad air days in the summer”.

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“After many, many doctor’s visits, trips to the emergency room, and missed days at school, we have learned how to manage my son’s asthma” said Paula Eggers, Marietta, mother of 13 year old Matt. “He is very active and loves to be outdoors, however, during high air pollution days, we still need to be careful to limit his exposure to the outdoor air” she said. “Even though his asthma is under control and he rarely has problems, we pay attention to the air pollution alerts” she added.

“The ALA report highlights Georgia’s serious problem with not just ozone but also fine particulate matter, which is linked to heart disease and cancer as well as respiratory diseases,” says Rebecca Watts Hull of Mothers & Others for Clean Air. “Diesel trucks, buses and machinery are an important part of the problem. Georgia needs to ramp up its efforts to put pollution control filters on diesel trucks, school buses and construction equipment and help our kids breathe easier.”

The American Lung Association report used air pollution data from 2004-2006, collected by state air pollution control agencies and reviewed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Unhealthy levels of ozone and particle pollution mean that people in high-risk categories are particularly threatened by poor air quality. They include children, teens and seniors, and people with asthma, chronic bronchitis, emphysema, cardiovascular disease and diabetes.

“The air quality in several cities has improved, but in others, declines in pollution have stalled. The trends tell us loud and clear that we need to do more to protect Americans from breathing air that’s simply hazardous to their health,” said Bernadette Toomey, President and Chief Executive Officer, American Lung Association.

Due to the lead time for the *State of the Air* report, the American Lung Association used the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) 1997 standard for ozone levels rather than the new tighter standard announced on March 12, 2008. “If we were to measure the number of unhealthy days against the new ozone standard, it would show that ozone pollution is worse than the report indicates,” said Ms. Toomey.

For local and state-by-state details included in the *American Lung Association State of the Air 2008* report and to learn how you can protect yourself and your family from air pollution, go to www.lungusa.org. While you’re there, you can send a message to members of Congress to urge them to keep the Clean Air Act strong.

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About the American Lung Association

Beginning our second century, the American Lung Association is the leading organization working to prevent lung disease and promote lung health. Lung disease death rates continue to increase while other leading causes of death have declined. The American Lung Association funds vital research on the causes of and treatments for lung disease. With the generous support of the public, the American Lung Association is “*Improving life, one breath at a time.*” For more information about the American Lung Association or to support the work it does, call 1-800-LUNG-USA (1-800-586-4872) or log on to www.lungusa.org.