Researchers track Amarillo pollution

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Measuring pollution in Amarillo all depends on the location.
So researchers tracking particles that contaminate
the sky moved their two measuring devices to where
it made the most sense for them: their own back
yard near Medical Center Park.

“It is a great place to measure air quality to repre-
represent the entire city,” said Dr. Brent Auermann,
associate professor of agricultural engineering at the
Texas Agricultural Experiment Station in Amarillo.

“This location represents the city and what kind of
air people are breathing.”

The station operates the air-monitoring devices
for the Texas Commission on Environmental Qual-
ity, and technicians can measure fine-particle matter
2.5-microns in size. For a
size comparison, the normal
human hair is about 70 mi-
crons, Auermann said.

Although the pollution devices’ previous location
downtown atop Amarillo’s
Public Library gave a good
representation of air quality in
Amarillo, researchers decided
to move the machines Tuesday
to the experimental station
at 6500 W. Amarillo Blvd.
because it is much easier to
fix something that is so close, Auermann said.

“They are in our back yard,
so it’s not a problem to trou-
bleshoot,” Auermann said.

“We have to make sure the
numbers are right.”

Brad Jones, regional direc-
tor of TCEQ, said another
factor affecting the decision
to move the machines was
because of construction at the
Globe-News Center for the
Performing Arts.

“Construction work at the
(center) might bias the
sample, and it might not be a
good representation,” Jones
said.

The devices track pollution
in the air when fine-particle
matter enters the inlet of
an air monitor.

Contaminants in the air are
then separated into smaller
parts until a sample is col-
clected on a filter. The filter
is later sent to a lab that has
a contract with the Environ-
mental Protection Agency for
analysis, Auermann said.

Although some cities have
poor air quality, Jones said
Amarillo’s is relatively good,
except for one problem.

“The only real thing we
ever see is particulates from
dust storms from 30- to 40-
mph winds,” Jones said. “We
really don’t have as much of

Air: Dust particles more of a problem than feedlot odor

THE ONLY REAL THING WE EVER SEE IS PARTICULATES FROM DUST STORMS FROM 30- TO 40-MPH WINDS.”

Brad Jones, regional director of TCEQ

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MEASURING POLLUTION: Brent Auermann, associate profes-
sor of agricultural science at the Texas Ag-
ricultural Station in Amarillo, points to an air inlet
on an air-monitoring device that can measure pol-
lution in Amarillo. Researchers moved the devices
Tuesday so the machines can better track pollution
in the city.

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