LOGAN—Logan can no longer ignore the tremendous public health crisis posed by air pollution in the Cache Valley, Mayor Randy Watts said Tuesday.

Along with the mayor and council representatives, Daines said, the committee will be made up of doctors, scientists, economists and concerned citizens.

Daines said it will take changes in the habits of the whole community to improve air quality.

“I think we are all concerned but it’s hard to change behavior,” Daines said. “When you are used to jumping in your car at any time it can create an issue if we ask people not to drive everywhere.”

Council member Tom Jensen said even though air quality cleanup and emissions testing are under the jurisdiction of Cache County, he believes citizens of Logan can do their part.

“The city is the largest demographic of the area,” Jensen said. “Most of the manufacturing is here and we are the economic center of the valley.”

Jensen said there are many options the council is considering to improve air quality.

“We could try to reduce emissions by having an anti-idling ordinance, carpooling, convert vehicles to natural gas, working from home and having garbage trucks not pick up on red-air days,” Jensen said.

Daines said she thinks the most viable option is the anti-idling ordinance. “Car emissions make up 40 percent of the problem,” she said.

Daines said her biggest personal concern is how red-air days affect the health of citizens in the valley.

“We have such a beautiful valley, and going outside and enjoying being outdoors is part of the lifestyle here,” Daines said. “When you can’t do that safely in the winter that’s a real concern. People that are expecting babies, children and older people are all at high risk. It’s a major health issue.”
The committee will meet for the first time next week to start working on the issue.

“We are just beginning,” Daines said. “We do hope to come up with some solid ideas to help improve this problem. We all need to rethink. It’s kind of a new reality.”

MDL/TP