



DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

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Former plant manager sentenced on environmental crimes in St. James Parish

BATON ROUGE – A former Ascension parish resident was sentenced yesterday for illegally discharging wastes from the Armant Environmental Services (AES) plant, a now-closed wastewater treatment facility in Vacherie, Louisiana.

Jeffrey Dabadie, 44, formerly of Bay St. Louis, Mississippi, is the former plant manager of AES. Dabadie pled guilty to three felony counts of knowingly violating the facility's Louisiana Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit.

Dabadie was arrested by DEQ's Criminal Investigation Division in June 2009. After a lengthy investigation by DEQ's Criminal Investigation Division, the Louisiana Environmental Crimes Task Force and DEQ inspectors found that he was routinely dumping loads of untreated wastewater on the ground, thereby bypassing the treatment facility at AES. Environmental scientists from DEQ took soil samples on the property and determined there were chemicals related to oil and petroleum products around broken pipes on the ground.

Judge Alvin Turner, Jr., of the 23rd Judicial District Court of Louisiana, sentenced Dabadie to one year of home incarceration. Dabadie's home incarceration will be electronically monitored.

In June 2011, AES and its owner, Charles Toth, Jr., pled guilty and were sentenced for similar violations. At that time, AES was ordered to pay \$150,000 in fines. As a special condition of probation, AES was ordered to pay \$15,000 to DEQ for costs of its investigation; \$10,000 to Keep Ascension Beautiful; \$10,000 to Keep St. James Beautiful; and \$10,000 to Keep Assumption Beautiful. AES was placed on supervised probation for five years and ordered to remediate the site to the satisfaction of DEQ. Toth was sentenced to pay a \$5,000 fine and two years of unsupervised probation. The former AES site has since been cleaned up.

"DEQ, along with its state and local partners, will continue to aggressively investigate and prosecute anyone who allows or engages in illegal dumping, disposal or discharge within the state," said DEQ Secretary Peggy Hatch. "These violations are conducted by individuals who show a blatant disregard for our public health and natural environment, so we encourage anyone with information on illegal activity to contact DEQ and local law enforcement so that we may initiate an investigation as soon as possible."

The case was prosecuted by District Attorney Ricky Babin of the 23rd Judicial District's District Attorney's Office and DEQ Criminal Investigation Division Attorney Mike Daniels, in his capacity as a Special Assistant District Attorney.

The mission of the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality is to protect the environment and public health. Any persons with knowledge of any spills, releases, odors, fish kills, open burning, waste tires and any other types of environmental incidents should contact DEQ at 225-219-3640 or Toll Free 1-888-763-5424.

Citizens may also report an environmentally-related incident online at DEQ's Web site:
<http://www.deq.louisiana.gov/apps/forms/irf/forms/>.