



Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality

A Note from the Secretary:

As we have transitioned into 2025, I am inspired by the remarkable achievements resulting from your dedication and hard work throughout 2024 in service to the people and the environment of Louisiana. Last year, we launched several initiatives and made significant commitments to ensure cleaner air and water, fostering an environment conducive to both environmental health and industry goals. I want to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to each of you.

I had the privilege of visiting every LDEQ office during the first half of the year, as promised. Hearing your insights, from field sampling to facility inspections and waste tire auditing, was invaluable. Your direct feedback illuminated our service to both internal and external customers, emphasizing the vital work we undertake at LDEQ. Notably, 2024 marked a visit from Governor Jeff Landry, who articulated his vision and initiatives during his address to you at our second All Employee Town Hall — a first in LDEQ's history. The energy and commitment displayed during Governor Landry's visit underscored our collective focus and drive. During that Town Hall, I proudly highlighted many of our accomplishments, but a more comprehensive report covering all of our significant achievements in 2024 will be published very soon.

In our role as stewards of Louisiana's environment, we strive to balance the needs of business with environmental health. We can and do have both! LDEQ is leading the charge toward a cleaner, healthier Louisiana by leveraging advanced technologies to enhance our operations. Our staff from all divisions have dedicated approximately 5,800 hours to documenting and refining our processes and systems as we move our technologies and regulations to the Space Age, where the business and environmental communities currently lie.

I am filled with optimism about the opportunities ahead. At LDEQ, we will continue to operate and meet the needs of today and plan to meet the growing demands on the horizon. Under Governor Landry's leadership, Louisiana is poised for a Southern Renaissance, and I am confident that we will continue to align our efforts with his vision, working together to protect our environment and empower our communities.

Sincerely,

Secretary Aurelia S. Giacometto



NEW INITIATIVES

Louisiana State Combined Charitable Campaign (LA SCCC)



LDEQ concluded its annual State Combined Charitable Campaign (SCCC) with a vibrant celebration of Spirit Week, aimed at raising funds for State charities and other worthy causes. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all who participated, your participation and contribution resulted in a remarkable 62% increase in donations compared to last year.

The festivities included engaging events such as Sports Day, Decade Day, and a spirited chili cook-off, all made possible by the diligent efforts of Athaliah Gatlin and Binh Dao, who organized the campaign for LDEQ. Thanks to your generosity, LDEQ successfully raised \$4,000 to support vital organizations like Second Harvest Food Bank and the American Cancer Society.

Tiger Team Updates

Old Marler Ford:

A commercial building in Colfax was destroyed and subsequently partially demolished following Hurricanes Laura and Delta. After three years of numerous citizen complaints about the owner's failure to secure and clean up the site, the LDEQ Tiger Team and Legal successfully worked through proper procedure and the Court to compel the owner to address the cleanup of the asbestos-laden structure. This action was essential to remediate this site and mitigate safety hazards to the public.

Cottonport Monofil:

Since our last update, LDEQ worked with Federal and State agencies to remove liens in excess of \$6.0 million that hampered cleanup efforts on the Cottonport Monofil site. Notably, First Guaranty Bank relinquished a mortgage of \$5.2 million of the Monofil. In concert with Avoyelles Parish, LDEQ is developing a strategy to address the whole tires and tire shreds on the site. This remains a top priority for both environmental and public safety given the area's proximity to a large correctional facility of 1,500 inmates.

Bagasse:

Secretary Giacometto toured the Delta Biofuels facility in Jeanerette with CEO Philip Keating. The facility turns bagasse, a fibrous waste product, from sugarcane into a small three-inch pellet. These pellets are then shipped to the UK to be used in boilers for energy generation.
#WasteToEnergy

Water Certification Improvements

Several efficiencies within the Water Permits Division are underway resulting in a more expeditious internal review of data. The State Water Quality certification process, governed by Section 401 of the Clean Water Act, results in a license or permit that authorizes discharges into State waters, ensuring compliance with environmental standards.

One efficiency is the inclusion of mapping coordinates for LDEQ templates, enabling more precise identification of locations requiring certification approvals.

Another is the streamlining of the approval process of revetment with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which plays a crucial role in stream restoration and river engineering by protecting riverbanks from erosion and the energy generated from maritime activities. LDEQ continues its efforts to deliver for the environment and for business as a coordinated approach, underscoring the commitment to maintaining high water quality standards while balancing developmental progress.

UPDATES FROM EACH DIVISION:

OEA: ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Underground Storage Tank Grants:

In 2024, legislation passed authorizing a new grant program for Underground Storage Tanks. The [Grant](#) reimburses up to \$150,000 per year for UST sites that are upgraded from single-walled tanks and/or piping to new double-walled standards. Last year, 18 projects were awarded tapping out the \$2 million annual grant award. This program will help small business owners upgrade to modern tank systems while also reducing leaks to the environment, which in turn reduces cleanup. The application period is open now and closes March 31, 2025.

Exceptional Events News:

As stated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), exceptional events are unusual or naturally occurring events that can affect air quality but are not reasonably controllable in order to maintain the National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS). The Port Allen monitoring station exceeded the 2024 PM2.5 NAAQS of 9.0ug/m3. In working with community partners, including the Baton Rouge Clean Air Coalition, LDEQ submitted two exceptional event demonstrations to the EPA for consideration. The Saharan Dust resulted in a 5 days of elevated PM2.5 levels in June 2022 and the Canadian Wildfire Smoke resulted in 2 days of PM2.5 exceedances in October 2023.

OEC: ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE

Under Review: Environmental Self-Audit Program:

In collaboration with the regulated community and with feedback from the public, LDEQ's voluntary Environmental Self-Audit program was established to achieve greater compliance and enhanced protection of human health and the environment by enabling LDEQ-regulated facilities to voluntarily disclose certain violations or exceedances. This proactive approach will address issues more quickly and institute corrective measures.

Radiation Training Course:

The Radiation Emergency Planning and Response Section hosted the Post Plume and Ingestion Pathway Workshop to keep organizations apprised of emerging technologies and safety requirements in recovery needs and actions following an incident at nuclear power plant. Held in October 2024 at LDEQ HQ, the Workshop included presenters from State and Federal agencies FEMA, LDH, LDAF, and GOHSEP. Some of the topics included understanding post-plume responsibilities, financial reimbursement, and many others.

OMF: MANAGEMENT AND FINANCE

On the Horizon: New Employee Orientation (NEO):

The New Employee Orientation (NEO) is designed for new employees to gain broader insight into each of LDEQ's five offices and their functions. The orientation is structured based on feedback from employees to help them navigate their new teams and their roles in the agency, and to meet their new colleagues. The goal of NEO is to welcome new employees and smooth the transition to the agency, exemplifying our mission of comprehensive environmental protection through service to the community and regulated entities.

Program Mapping:

The Program Mapping is an agency-wide effort to allocate our expenditures with a more accurately described cost center. This alignment confirms spending with the Administration's priorities and the mission operations of the agency. The project's granularity to a programmatic level provides transparency and allows for a more expedient use of funds for top priority projects and programs such as LA DOGE to be implemented across State agencies.

OES: ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

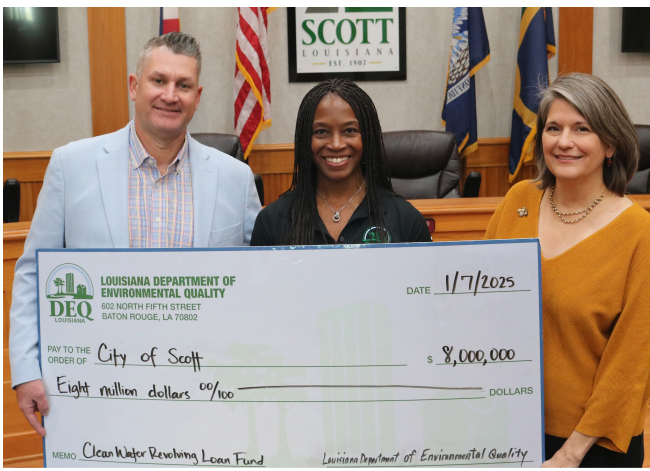
Emergency Beetle Subcommittee:

Due to excessive heat in 2023, millions of acres of tree loss from drought and wildfire resulted in economic injury to the forestry industry. The devastation was exacerbated by a bark beetle infestation to the remaining drought-stressed pine trees. LDEQ participated in the House Committee of Agriculture, Forestry, and Aquaculture, and Rural Development's Emergency Beetle Subcommittee, which was established to address Gov. Landry's Executive Order JML 24-161. In response, LDEQ promulgated the [Beetle Emergency Rule](#) to facilitate the disposal of infested trees and provide relief to the forest industry.

Louisiana Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (LELAP):

LELAP assesses and accredits environmental laboratories that generate data submitted directly or indirectly to LDEQ. LELAP monitors laboratories to ensure compliance with State regulations and Federal standards. We are one of 14 National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (NELAP)-recognized accreditation bodies. With the increase in accredited laboratories in greater Baton Rouge, LELAP ensures that laboratories are provided with any and all updates to State or Federal regulations, including the most recent guideline on [Analysis of Pollutants](#) under the Clean Water Act.

GETTING INTO THE COMMUNITY:



LDEQ's Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) provides financial assistance in the form of low interest loans to rural and underserved communities to help bring them into compliance with the Clean Water Act. In 2024, more than \$126.18 million was awarded to 18 projects. Funding for the CWSRF is provided by Federal grants and matching funds generated by the program's interest and loan repayments. Recently, Secretary Giacometto presented CWSRF checks to the cities of Scott and Urania. Scott was awarded \$8 million for infrastructure updates to accommodate the anticipated population growth. Urania, the poorest town in the U.S. according to the 2020 U.S. Census Bureau, will use the funds to update aging wastewater infrastructure. This fund is an invaluable resources to cities and municipalities across Louisiana.

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT: LATEST PRESS RELEASES



LDEQ and DOTD Collaborate to Advance Critical Infrastructure

The I-10 Calcasieu River Bridge endeavor is a significant road infrastructure project for the State of Louisiana that will provide more lanes, full shoulders, and a less steep incline for its future travelers. This \$2.1 billion project encompasses a 5.5-mile corridor, including interstate roadways, service roads, and ramps. LDEQ's work with DOTD to address a historical chemical release and ensure compliance with environmental procedures so that construction can continue without impediments. The collaboration between LDEQ and DOTD prioritizes environmental safety while ensuring efficiency in development, particularly for a long-awaited project that will promote growth for southern Louisiana.



LDEQ Announces Approval for Electronic Reporting under CROMERR

In November 2024, the U.S. EPA approved LDEQ's Regulatory Services Portal for electronic reporting under the Cross-Media Electronic Reporting Regulation (CROMERR). This approval simplifies the reporting process for several critical LDEQ programs. LDEQ can now accept electronic reports for National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants (NESHAP), Clean Air Act Title V, National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES), Underground Storage Tank Standards, and others. EPA's approval cleared a major hurdle in LDEQ's efforts to make online permitting applications and other reporting available to the regulated community. This is another step forward in LDEQ's efforts to modernize our technology and data platforms — from the Stone Age to the Space Age.



CarenCro Tiger Team Reaches Successful Conclusion on Wastewater Project

The CarenCro Tiger Team (CTT) was formed in March 2024, following a meeting between Secretary Giacometto and CarenCro Mayor Charlotte Clavier regarding compliance issues with CarenCro's existing aging wastewater treatment plant. After the CTT conducted an in-depth analysis of wastewater treatment plants of similar-sized communities with comparable population sizes, the CTT recommended the City seek a second opinion on the cost estimates for its new wastewater treatment plant. The second estimate resulted in a savings of over \$20 million dollars and a phased implementation approach to enable the city to balance current operations and future population growth. In addition, the CTT identified technical assistance opportunities through LDEQ's Clean Water State Revolving Fund and aid through Louisiana Rural Water Association.

EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION: SECRETARY WORKING LUNCH & EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH

Secretary Working Social (SWS)



This Quarter's theme was Do-It-Yourself (DIY) and included LDEQ employees: Adrie De Waal, Statewide Program Manager in OMF; Gene Jarreau, Environmental Scientist 3 in OES; and Shanna Mason, Geologist 3 in OEA. After discussing statuses of LDEQ initiatives — such as Louisiana Environmental Ambassadors Program (LEAP), Tiger Teams, electronic permitting and new community outreach projects — Adrie, Gene, and Shanna chatted about their crafting hobbies.

Adrie enjoys the art of acrylic paint pouring, a fluid painting technique that creates unique geometric shapes and designs by pouring acrylic paint on a canvas. Shanna, who also loves to paint with acrylics, is inspired by landscapes and places she has visited. Gene was interested in having lunch with employees from other Offices to learn about their talents and what they do within the agency.



The SWS provides an opportunity for employees to connect over shared interests while also learning about LDEQ's initiatives and programs. As always, thank you to India Ambeau for her work in organizing this quarterly event for the agency.

Employees of the Month (EOM)



October 2024 EOM:
Lisa Miller



November 2024 EOM:
Daniel Lambert



December 2024 EOM:
Tiffany White

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- **JANUARY 27-28:** The Louisiana Municipal Association Mid-Winter Conference
- **FEBRUARY 4:** GGNS 2025 Exercise Final Planning Meeting (LA, MS, NR, & FEMA)
- **FEBRUARY 11:** Community Air Monitoring and Notification Task Force Meeting
- **FEBRUARY 20:** LDEQ Louisiana Motor Fuels Underground Storage Tank Trust Fund Advisory Board
- **FEBRUARY 27:** Air & Waste Management Association, Southwest Louisiana Chapter Spring Conference
- **MARCH 12-13:** Association of Clean Water Administrators (ACWA) 2025 Mid-Year Meeting



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