



DISCOVER DEQ

LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY NEWSLETTER



December 2023 Issue Number: 143

What's Inside?

[Focus on 2023 – Looking Back](#)

[Message from the Secretary](#)

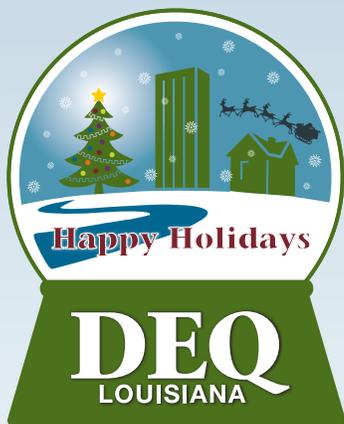
[LDEQ employees around the state give back in 2023](#)

[New EPA mission in the Mississippi River Plastic Pollution Project](#)

[Louisiana Clean Fuels presents the 2023 Clean Fuel Leaders Awards](#)

[Holidays at LDEQ](#)

[Who's Who At LDEQ?](#)



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Focus on 2023 – Looking Back

The past year brought many changes to the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ). Most notably, Secretary Dr. Chuck Carr Brown departed the agency after seven and a half years, and Secretary Roger Gingles took over to serve through the end of the John Bel Edwards administration. One thing has stayed the same through it all: the agency's mission.

"I have heard that the only thing that is constant is change," Gingles said. "We are in the middle of another change at LDEQ as the agency prepares to transition to a new gubernatorial administration. In the past, leadership has come and gone, but this agency has been consistent in its commitment to protect human health and the environment in Louisiana. I don't believe that will change."

LDEQ is a diverse agency whose mission is to provide service to the people of Louisiana through comprehensive environmental protection in order to promote and protect health, safety and welfare. This is accomplished by a group of dedicated and qualified employees in the Baton Rouge headquarters and the regional offices around the state. They face challenges daily, and each year brings new ones and familiar ones.



One of LDEQ's MAMLs

Having the right tools is key to successfully performing any job. LDEQ has developed and acquired many tools to perform their duties. To assist with monitoring air quality, the department has two Mobile Air Monitoring Laboratories (MAML) which can be sent around the state to sample air quality. The sampling could be done in response to an emergency or to document background information for places where the state does not have permanent monitors.

In 2023, the MAMLs were deployed on routine missions around the state for non-event monitoring. Each month, one of the MAMLs went to a site in Louisiana to collect data, provide a training opportunity for MAML staff, perform outreach with the public and remain ready and available for emergencies. Among the sites the MAMLs visited in 2023 are Hammond, Mandeville, Lafayette, Jennings, Mossville, St. James, Cameron, Baton Rouge, Slidell, LaSalle, Washington Parish and Natchitoches.

Continued on page 2



DISCOVER DEQ

LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY NEWSLETTER



December 2023 Issue Number: 143

“We are pleased to have introduced the St. James Air Monitor this year. We hope to have it up and running by first quarter of 2024,” said Gary Fulton, assistant secretary for Environmental Assessment.

The department also has unmanned aircraft of various sizes and uses such as aerial views, 3D visualization, emergency response and mapping. Drawing on its ambient air monitoring system (fixed monitors), MAML data, unmanned aircraft data and field sampling for water quality, LDEQ is able to form a more complete picture of the environment and issues in Louisiana.

More recently LDEQ received a donation from the Department of Energy’s Sandia National Laboratory in the form of a Mobile Source Trailer. The \$96,049 Mobile Source Trailer is a resource for LDEQ to practice radiation safety. It will also serve as an official command center for the agency while on the road. LDEQ hopes to use the trailer to teach the public about harmful radiation and ways in which the agency can help combat it. The trailer will be used for radiation outreach to inform the general public and responding agencies about basic radiation, effects of radiation, safety and even jobs that involve radioactive material. The trailer will also be used to train radiation inspectors and license writers. Another benefit is that new LDEQ radiation employees will be able to have hands on training outside of normal inspections.

“ERSD has met and/or exceeded all grant, contract, and regulatory commitments with the NRC, FDA and DOE regarding radiation safety for 2023,” Enforcement Division ER Administrator Jerry Lang said.



The Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) communications division has ventured into a brand new project by starting an official LDEQ monthly podcast. The podcast, appropriately named “LDEQ On Air,” features one guest a month answering questions about environmental issues. The goal of the podcast is to inform the public on how issues are addressed at LDEQ and the processes the agency uses to solve those issues. Seven episodes of LDEQ On Air were produced in 2023, and all can be accessed via the agency website at www.deq.louisiana.gov/podcast. Live shows are aired on Apple Podcasts, Spotify and Google Podcasts.

“We want to use every media resource at our disposal to provide stakeholders with clear and understandable information about the activities of LDEQ,” Press Secretary Greg Langley said. “Often what we do at this agency is so technical that it’s difficult to for a layperson to understand. We want to make our work and goals comprehensible to everyone. The podcast is another tool we can use to do that.”

LDEQ’s Brownfields program made great strides in 2023. Brownfield sites are vacant and underutilized properties where actual or suspected environmental issues are a barrier to redevelopment. Under the Office of Environmental Assessment, Remediation Division, LDEQ’s Brownfields Program partners Federal, State and local resources to facilitate the reuse of Brownfield sites throughout the State. Addressing potential environmental issues, especially financial and regulatory hurdles, is often intimidating, creating a barrier to the redevelopment or expanded use of these sites. LDEQ’s Brownfields Program helps convert these properties from community liabilities into community assets by assisting local governments and communities navigate the environmental process from investigation to cleanup and redevelopment.

Examples of Brownfield sites include (but are not limited to): abandoned gas stations; vacant historic buildings (commercial structures, schools, government buildings, etc.) abandoned or underutilized industrial complexes and vacant lots in previously developed areas. The program has gained better funding and accolades for projects during the year.

Continued on page 3



DISCOVER DEQ

LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY NEWSLETTER



December 2023 Issue Number: 143

In 2023, LDEQ Brownfields Team attended the 2023 National Brownfields Conference in Detroit. LDEQ's Rebecca Otte, the Statewide Brownfield Coordinator, received the State and Local Brownfield Leadership Phoenix Award.

"The LDEQ Brownfield team attended multiple events including the Louisiana Municipal Association Conferences, Main Street Conference, and Police Jury Association of Louisiana Conference where we connected with communities from across the state and were able to give presentations to spread the word about our program. We're thankful for our partners Statewide, including government, nonprofit, private and other entities, who are passionate about revitalizing Brownfield sites throughout Louisiana," LDEQ Statewide Brownfield Coordinator Rebecca Otte said.

There was good attendance for the 2023 Louisiana Brownfields Conference in Alexandria in October. The two-day event was packed with helpful presentations and panel discussions, Q&As for attendees to get their Brownfield questions answered.

The grease that oils the gears for all LDEQ actions is funding. Through Financial Services, the agency keeps its work going.

"In 2023, it was mostly business as usual in the Financial Services Division. A few highlights include wrapping up Hurricanes Laura and Ida reimbursement requests, processing several new grant applications, submitting our FY 2024 budget request and completing the FY 2023 financial statements. The Motor Fuels Section also completed rulemaking on a new program that will provide grants to underground storage tank owners to upgrade their tanks," LDEQ Accountant Administrator Theresa Delafosse said.

As 2023 goes the way of all good years, LDEQ and its employees can be proud of the accomplishments and good work that has been part of the year.



LDEQ Secretary Roger Gingles speaks to attendees at the 2023 Louisiana Brownfield Conference in Alexandria, Oct. 25.



Message from the Secretary

Roger W. Gingles



Secretary Roger W. Gingles

I retired from LDEQ in 2013. I had been here for 27 years. I know how hard it is to walk out that door for the last time. Now, seven years later, I will do it again.

I worked in all kinds of capacities at this agency -- environmental scientist, senior scientist, program manager and assistant administrator – and in each position I made more friends. After Dr. Chuck Carr Brown took over as secretary in 2016, he decided to restore the Office of Environmental Assessment. I had worked in water quality, solid waste, legal affairs and remediation. One of the most enjoyable things I did was served as state Brownfields coordinator for about 12 years. I had the right background and was still young enough to come back to work, so Dr. Brown convinced me to return to work at the agency one more time to rebuild and head Environmental Assessment.

So my second stint at LDEQ began in 2017. Just like before, I made more friends when I came back aboard. A lot of my old running mates were still here too. It was a joy to work with them and to work for Dr. Brown. Through it all, I never dreamed I would ever be secretary of this agency.

Then Dr. Brown announced he would be leaving before the end of Gov. John Bel Edwards' second term. Dr. Brown called me in to his office and asked me to finish out the term. I was conflicted. It was an honor to be asked, but I had seen the kind of pressure that job puts on someone. I had my doubts about wanting to sit in that seat. In my life, I have valued loyalty and team players throughout my career. I could do no less than I had asked of others. So I said I would do it.

On April 1, 2023, Gov. Edwards named me to oversee LDEQ. I am sure some folks at LDEQ were surprised. Some may even have thought it was an April Fool's Day joke. They say the view from the top is different. You don't know what that means until you are there. I found out pretty soon that you can't please everyone even part of the time. I think I learned about as much in the last eight months as I did the previous 33 years.

It was all for the best, and I am glad I was able to serve this governor and continue Dr. Brown's legacy for a few months longer. And I got to spend more time with the people at LDEQ. This agency has the greatest group of employees I have ever been around. I probably would have fallen flat on my face if I had not gotten some much help from all of y'all. That's the thing I value most about the years I spent here – you.

Now, as I said, it's almost time to go again. Goodbyes are always hard. I am not going to be on Mars (OK -- maybe that part of Mars in North Louisiana), so I will be seeing some of you from time to time. I'm not going to say goodbye. Instead, I'll wish all of you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

God bless each and every one of you.



LDEQ employees around the state give back in 2023

LDEQ employees are an involved and generous group, all around the state and all year. You will see them supporting many causes, assisting and appearing at many educational and outreach events.

One of the first charitable campaigns of the year benefits the American Heart Association and LDEQ participates every year. For 2023, we participate in many different ways. Employees could participate in casual dress days and that raised \$1901 for the cause. You could buy hearts and dedicate them to whomever you wished, which raised \$270, while snacks and raffle baskets raised another \$100. In all, LDEQ employees gave a total of \$3,172 for the Heart Association.

The State Combined Charitable Campaign for 2023 is another way that state employees can give back. Employees can pick their favorite charity and donate funds to it. The top charity this year was Capital Area Animal Welfare Society (CAWWS) and they received \$928.47. The rest of the top ten received \$103.17 each. The rest of the tops ten were:

- St. Jude Children's Hospital
- Alzheimer's Services of the Capital Area
- IRIS Domestic Violence Center
- American Cancer Society
- Autism Society, Louisiana State Chapter
- Team Gleason Foundation
- St. Joseph Hospice Foundation
- LA CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates)
- Juvenile Diabetes Research

Little Lambs is a Christmas gift drive, complete with Christmas Tree, that provides gifts for the children of an incarcerated parent or parents. Little Lambs is an outreach of InnerFaith Prison Ministry that has been around since 1995. They have 300 children in their program and expect 400 children for Christmas this year. Gifts and a food boxes will be provided for the kids and their caretakers. This year more than 70 gifts were purchased for the children.



LDEQ Secretary Roger Gingles (left) presents check to Brian Hightower of the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank.

At Thanksgiving and Christmas, LDEQ participates in the Thanksgiving and Christmas Food Drives for the Food Bank. In 2023, for Thanksgiving Meals, 611 lbs. of food was donated in our collection bins. One hundred eighty four lbs. went to Second Harvest Food Bank and 427 pounds to the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank. This is equivalent to 509 meals! The Christmas meals food drive was just completed. Employees could also donate money and did so.

As well as donating funds and food, LDEQ employees donate blood and sweat – time and energy.

Three times a year, LDEQ's blood drive committee has a two-day blood drive. Employees are asked to donate blood. This year, during the three events' LDEQ employees donated 157 pints of life-giving blood ensuring that all LDEQ employees were covered in case they need blood.

Continued on page 5



In April, LDEQ employees participated in Keep Louisiana Beautiful's Love the Boot Week. LDEQ's Baton Rouge cleanup team, Team DEQ, consisted of 43 employees who used grabbers, latex gloves and 30-gallon bags to collect 33 bags of litter. The most commonly collected items were cigarette butts, plastic bottles and aluminum cans. Plastic Mardi Gras beads, plastic bags and construction debris were also collected along the grounds. LDEQ's volunteers covered areas from Spanish Town Road to Main Street and from Fourth Street to Eighth Street. The Acadiana Regional Office (ARO) had 15 volunteers who collected 42-gallon bags of litter and approximately 100 pounds of other bulk trash. Team Southwest Regional Office's (SWRO) event had 15 volunteers who collected twenty one 30-gallon bags of cans and bottles, fast food wrappers, shingles, tin, vinyl siding, fiberglass and construction debris left over from Hurricane Laura, along the side of the road and ditches.



The Acadiana Regional Office collected litter for Keep Louisiana Beautiful's Love the Boot Week.

In 2023, LDEQ employees participated in five Household Hazardous Materials Day. They helped at two in St. Landry, two in Ascension and one in West Baton Rouge. They manned the paint swap to recover useable paint.

In addition to all the planned events, LDEQ employees also do a great number of outreach and education events. They go to the schools to demonstrate environmental practices. They also judge projects in science fairs. They man educational and outreach booths at conference and other events. LDEQ employees care about the environment and the state and volunteer time and talent to show they do.

New EPA mission in the Mississippi River Plastic Pollution Project

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is starting a new project to learn about the plastic pollution in the Mississippi River. EPA will gather information from four communities. EPA plans to work with Mississippi River Cities and Towns Initiative (MRCTI) alongside these four communities: Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota; St. Louis, Missouri, and East St. Louis, Illinois; Vicksburg, Mississippi; and Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

The project will identify types and sources of plastic pollution in each area, and explore implementing barriers as ways to keep areas with high waste plastic pollution clean.

EPA's premier goal is to reduce plastic pollution at an accelerated rate. This will demonstrate to communities along the Mississippi River the positive impact that solid waste and water quality programs can have on the environment. EPA hopes to spur a plastic pollution prevention revolution nationwide.

EPA understands the importance of plastic pollution prevention to areas along the Mississippi River. The Mississippi River watershed is the largest source of plastic aquatic debris in the U.S. Common aquatic plastic debris items are plastic bags, soda bottles and food wrappers. Debris that is less than five millimeters in size is considered a microplastic. Microplastics can easily invade water sources and pollute the environment. Animals can mistake the plastic for food, ingest it and choke or starve to death.

EPA partners of the Mississippi River Plastic Pollution Research Project include the Office of Research and Development Region 4 (Kentucky, Mississippi and Tennessee); Region 5 (Illinois, Minnesota and Wisconsin); Region 6 (Arkansas and Louisiana) and Region 7 (Iowa and Missouri). The project period is projected to last until September 2024.



Louisiana Clean Fuels presents the 2023 Clean Fuel Leaders Awards

Louisiana Clean Fuels (LCF) honored clean fuel leaders and top fleets in Louisiana at the 2023 Clean Fuel Leader Awards ceremony. These awards highlight the exceptional efforts and accomplishments of organizations and individuals dedicated to advancing clean fuel technologies and sustainable transportation practices in Louisiana.

The highest honor went to United Parcel Service (UPS), Clean Fuel Champion, for achieving a reduction of more than 11,873 tons of greenhouse gas emissions in the LCF territory through use of a wide range of alternative fuels and fuel-saving strategies across their fleet. UPS also won top honors as the Top Performing Renewable Natural Gas (RNG) and Propane fleet in Louisiana.

John W. Stone Oil Distributor received the second highest honor, Clean Fuel Champion Runner-up, for reducing greenhouse gas emissions by more than 11,800 tons. John W. Stone Oil Distributor is the local leader in dockside, mid-streaming and offshore fueling along the Mississippi River from Baton Rouge to Venice and into the Gulf of Mexico. Using a mix of biodiesel, shore-power idle reduction and fuel economy improvements across their fleet, Stone Oil offset 11,800 Tons of Green House Gases (GHGs) in 2022.

Other recipients of awards are:

- Top Performing Electric Vehicle (EV) Fleet Award -- Capital Area Transit System (CATS)
- Most Improved Award -- CATS
- Top Performing Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) Fleet Award – Waste Management
- Top Performing Renewable Natural Gas (RNG) Fleet Award -- UPS
- Top Performing Propane Fleet Award -- UPS
- Dealership of the Year Award -- Gerry Lane Chevrolet
- Most VMTs Reduced Award -- Republic Services
- Innovative Incentive Program Award -- Cleco
- Excellence in Public Service Award -- Tom Harris, Secretary of the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources
- On the Ball Award -- Ivan Smith Furniture
- Top On-Road Idle Reduction Fleet Award -- Amerigas



Top Performing CNG Fleet: Waste Management. Pictured left to right: Tyler Herrmann (LCF), Ann Vail (LCF), Donald Hains and Scott Barrios.



Dealership of the Year: Gerry Lane Chevrolet. Pictured left to right: Ann Vail (LCF), Tyler Lane, and Scott Barrios.



Most Improved Fleet & Top EV Fleet: CATS. Pictured left to right: Ann Vail (LCF), Theo Richards, Brandon Songy and Scott Barrios.

Continued on page 7



DISCOVER DEQ

LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY NEWSLETTER



December 2023 Issue Number: 143

Partnering with dealerships to educate the public about the benefits of the alternative fuel vehicles they sell is a major part of the support our coalition provides to the community. One dealership stood out in 2023: Gerry Lane Chevrolet. This dealership was awarded, “Dealership of the Year” for being “all in” on selling EVs and supporting education and workforce development initiatives in the Greater Baton Rouge area. Throughout the year, they were always available to assist in Drive Electric Louisiana and Louisiana Clean Fuels outreach events. From STEM camps for school age children to EV showcases at LSU Baseball games to National Drive Electric Week, we could always depend on them to help organize the events and bring vehicles for display.

Tyler Lane accepted the awards on behalf of his dealership and said, “I feel incredibly honored to receive this award from such a committed organization. It is a privilege to represent and support one of the top Clean Cities coalitions in the nation. While I support all alternative fuel options, my biggest opportunity to make an impact is in the electric vehicle segment. We are arguably the most committed dealership group in the state to selling electric vehicles. This will make a great impact as we continue to operate the number one volume dealerships in the state for almost all of the brands that we sell. Thank you Louisiana Clean Fuels for all of the great work, and I am excited to continue supporting the mission to further clean fuels in Louisiana.”

LDNR Secretary Tom Harris was unable to attend in person, but accepted the award the following week at the Resilience Summit at the Estuary on Dec. 5. “We recognize that greater options for energy create economic opportunities for our state, as well as greater energy security for our nation as a whole, and that is why DNR is proud to participate in the U.S. Department of Energy’s Clean Cities Program by hosting and supporting the work of the Louisiana Clean Fuels program,” Harris said as he accepted the awards at the Resilience Summit. “It is a worthwhile effort, and one that can help our state continue to diversify and grow its economy while remaining good stewards of the natural resources we have been blessed with.”

Also not able to attend the event, Trey Smith of Ivan Smith Furniture has operated a fleet of CNG delivery trucks in Northwest Louisiana for many years and shared these words with us about his award: “We are proud to be the first majority CNG fleet in our industry starting back in 2013. It has been a great move for us both financially and doing what we can to reduce our emissions.”

The 2023 Clean Fuel Leader Awards celebrated outstanding achievements in environmental sustainability, honoring organizations and individuals pioneering clean fuel technologies. Winners like CATS, tripling their electric buses, and Gerry Lane Chevrolet, promoting EVs, showcased remarkable commitment. Republic Services and WM optimized routes and used alternative fuels, while Cleco’s incentives spurred electric vehicle infrastructure. These efforts, along with UPS’s diverse clean fuel usage, significantly slashed greenhouse gases and other criteria pollutants such as NOx, which contributes to poor air quality and contributes to respiratory diseases.

LCF Executive Director Ann Vail and LCF Board President, Scott Barrios of Entergy, presented the awards and announced the winners at the event, which was sponsored by Cleco, Marquette Transportation, John W. Stone Oil and Gerry Lane Chevrolet. LCF is proud to honor these outstanding organizations and to recognize the achievements of clean fuel stakeholders who have gone above and beyond in reaching their environmental and transportation goals. For more information, contact Ann Vail at (225) 281-7353 or ann@louisianacleanfuels.org.

About Clean Cities: As part of the U.S. Department of Energy’s (DOE) Vehicle Technologies Office (VTO), Clean Cities coalitions foster the nation’s economic, environmental, and energy security by working locally to advance affordable, domestic transportation fuels, energy efficient mobility systems, and other fuel-saving technologies and practices. More information is available at www.cleancities.energy.gov.

About Louisiana Clean Fuels: Louisiana Clean Fuels is a U.S. Department of Energy Clean Cities Coalition, supported by the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources and member organizations. We are a non-profit organization serving both public and private fleets for over 21 years. The mission of Louisiana Clean Fuels is to advance the nation’s environmental, economic, and energy security by supporting local actions to diversify transportation fuel options. More information is available at www.louisianacleanfuels.org.



Holidays at LDEQ





Who's Who At LDEQ?



Isabella Purpura – Environmental Scientist I, Air Permits Division, Office of Environmental Services

Purpura is a native of New Orleans. She graduated from Louisiana State University with a bachelor's degree in Coastal and Environmental Science in May 2023.

In her spare time, she enjoys outdoor activities like walking and kayaking, as well as cooking.

Chrysalis Ortiz – Environmental Scientist I, Solid Waste Permits Division, Office of Environmental Assessment

Ortiz is a native of Laplace and has lived in Baton Rouge for the past ten years. She graduated from Louisiana State University in 2018 with a Bachelor's in Renewable Natural Resources Management. After graduation, she worked in several animal care facilities and clinics as a veterinary technician. Working at LDEQ is a big change for her.

In her spare time, she enjoys cuddling with her two cats, cross-stitching and going on nature walks.



Matthew Burton – Environmental Scientist I, Office of Environmental Assessment

Burton is a native of Albany. He graduated from Louisiana State University with a Bachelor of Science in Chemistry. He previously worked with Greif as a lab technician for over a year after graduation before joining LDEQ.

In his spare time, he enjoys playing Nintendo video games.



DISCOVER DEQ

LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY NEWSLETTER



December 2023 Issue Number: 143

Louisiana Department Of Environmental Quality's Third Quarter Summaries

Third Quarter 2023 Enforcement Actions:

<http://deq.louisiana.gov/page/enforcement-actions>

Third Quarter 2023 Settlement Agreements:

<http://deq.louisiana.gov/page/enforcement-division>

Third Quarter 2023 Air Permits:

<http://deq.louisiana.gov/page/permits-issued-by-calendar-quarter>

Third Quarter 2023 Water Permits:

<http://deq.louisiana.gov/page/lpdes>

Third Quarter 2023 Solid and Hazardous Waste Permits:

<http://deq.louisiana.gov/page/waste-permits>

