



## DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

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SECRETARY

**For Immediate Release**  
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### **Rapides Parish man pleads guilty to illegal disposal of wastes**

**BATON ROUGE** – Yesterday, a Rapides parish contractor admitted in 9<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Court to illegally disposing of wastes. Walter Monroe Smith, Sr., 62, of Pineville and owner of Rapides Roofing and Home Repair, pled guilty to two separate felony counts of illegally disposing of wastes that endangered or could have endangered human life or health.

In February 2009, Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality criminal investigators responded to a complaint regarding burning shingles containing asbestos. The shingles were collected from a roofing job, performed by Smith's company, on the city of Pineville's police detective's building. Further investigation revealed that Smith instructed employees of his company to set fire to piles of shingles on his property located in Deville. As a result, Smith was charged by James Downs, the Rapides District Attorney, in September 2009.

In September 2010, Smith instructed another employee to set fire to roofing shingles, tire rims, plastics products, and other solid wastes at another site in Deville. Smith was arrested by investigators from DEQ's Criminal Investigation Division for the second incident, and again charged by the Rapides Parish District Attorney's Office.

“There are a few business owners in the state who choose to skirt environmental and health laws by disposing of waste in an illegal and improper fashion,” said DEQ Secretary Peggy Hatch. “DEQ's mission is to aggressively investigate and prosecute anyone found to be in violation of the very laws that have been put in place to protect human health and the environment. We will continue to work with our local, state and federal partners to ensure such violators are brought to justice.”

In accepting Smith's plea, the Honorable Thomas M. Yeager ordered Smith to pay a \$3,000 fine, to reimburse the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality the amount of \$2,000 for the cost of investigation, and to reimburse the Rapides District Attorney's office the amount of \$1,000 for the cost of prosecution. Yeager sentenced Smith to five years of hard labor, suspended, plus three years of probation. Smith was also ordered to publish a public apology in the local newspaper.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney Jamilla Bynog.

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 may contact the department at 225-219-3640 or Toll Free 1-888-763-5424.