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Governor proclaims May as Air Quality Awareness Month

BATON ROUGE – Gov. John Bel Edwards has declared May Air Quality Awareness Month in Louisiana. Even though the air quality in Louisiana is continually improving there is still much work to do.

May is traditionally the start of ozone season and the proclamation encourages citizens to become familiar with the Air Quality Index, to understand what causes ozone formation and to take voluntary steps to help prevent ozone formation and improve air quality. National Air Quality Awareness week is April 30 to May 4.

The air pollutant ozone is formed by a chemical reaction when pollutants nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compound react under a bright sun. Ozone formation is most prevalent between May 1 and Sept. 30, but it can occur at other times. When everyone takes necessary steps to limit the release of ozone-causing pollutants into the atmosphere, there is a good chance that ozone formation may decrease.

Good air quality is everyone's responsibility. Industry operates under regulations and controls to prevent emissions, but there are steps the public can take to improve air quality. Those steps include: walking, biking, carpooling, using mass transit and ride sharing and using gasoline powered engines and fueling vehicles after 6 p.m. Combining errands and bringing lunch to work also reduce emissions. Idling your vehicle increases emission levels so turning off the engine when waiting or walking into a restaurant instead of sitting in the drive thru reduces emissions and improves air quality.

Knowing about air quality is important and LDEQ offers ways for you to get more information. If you are interested in receiving air quality information automatically by email, text or on a phone app, subscribe to EnviroFlash. This system allows citizens to receive daily or on demand air quality information and ensures that the public receives Air Quality Action Day alerts and other pertinent air quality information. To sign up to receive air quality notifications from EnviroFlash go to <http://deq.louisiana.gov/news/enviroflash-the-easy-way-to-get-current-air-quality-information>. Current air quality information is available for the LDEQ air monitors on the LDEQ website.