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LDEQ receives 2020 EPA Clean Air Excellence Award in the Community Action category

BATON ROUGE – Today, the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) received the 2020 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Clean Air Excellence Award in the Community Action category for LDEQ’s Temporary Located Community (TLC) Ambient Air Monitoring Program. The EPA Clean Air Excellence Awards Program periodically recognizes and honors outstanding innovative efforts to help make progress in achieving cleaner air. LDEQ’s TLC Air Monitor Program exemplifies the agency’s efforts in this undertaking.

The LDEQ has been working to promote environmental justice in Louisiana for almost 30 years. The LDEQ began fostering relationships with underserved communities by bringing assistance via the TLC Ambient Air Monitoring Program. This program has allowed LDEQ to expand its outreach to under-served communities and to respond meaningfully and effectively to their concerns.

“When I took the position of Secretary over five years ago, I created the acronym E.E.A.T.: Environmental Education, Access to decision makers, and Trust in the decisions that are made. Each of these values is at work in the Temporary Located Community Ambient Air Monitoring Program,” LDEQ Secretary Dr. Chuck Carr Brown said.

“Out of this and my desire to find a way to best serve our constituents, I ordered the two newest MAMLS to advance our air monitoring capabilities. We already had multiple stationary air monitors throughout the state, but we were also able to add temporary monitoring stations in distressed areas through the TLC Ambient Air Monitoring Program. Now we see some of our temporary locations turning into stationary sites, and it’s a good problem to have. These transitions highlight that our efforts in these areas were not futile but the start of a long-term solution,” Brown said.

TLC Air Monitors collect ambient air quality data in neighborhoods using EPA approved methods and protocols for at least one year. The data is collected and relayed to LDEQ’s website, <https://airquality.deq.louisiana.gov/Data>, providing real-time data on the extent of outdoor pollution and air quality pollution trends of certain regulated pollutants.

Today, LDEQ collects data in three neighborhood locations, including St. Rose, Marrero and Waggaman. Community partners assist in determining which pollutants to monitor for and the site location. The Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) partners through their Environmental Public Health Tracking (EPHT), which further publicizes the data and educates the community concerning health risks.

LDEQ also deploys the Mobile Air Monitoring Lab (MAML) to support the TLC Air Monitoring Program. The MAML and TLC Air Monitors also serve as an educational opportunity for LDEQ to invite the public to tour the resources being dedicated to their community.

LDEQ regularly meets with various community groups as it conducts its business of environmental stewardship. These locally-led, community-driven solutions help to improve environmental protection and have become a key component in LDEQ’s mission to protect human health and the environment in Louisiana.

Learn more about LDEQ’s TLC Ambient Air Monitoring Program at <https://deq.louisiana.gov/page/tlc-air-monitoring>