



DISCOVER DEQ

LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY NEWSLETTER



February 2014 Issue Number: 25

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Know about your air quality! Sign up for EnviroFlash and receive air quality notifications by email or phone. Go to www.deq.louisiana.gov/enviroflash.

DEQ turns 30!

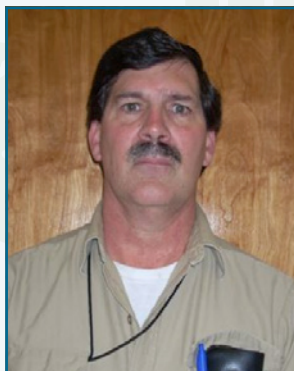
In February 2014, The Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality turned 30 years old.

DEQ origins include being a part of the Department of Natural Resources as the Office of Environmental Affairs (OEA). The OEA was established by Act 449 of the 1979 Legislative Session. Act 449 consolidated existing environmental programs from multiple agencies including the Hazardous Waste and Nuclear Energy and Radiation Control Divisions from DNR, the Water Pollution Control Division and the Stream Control Commission from the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries and the Air Quality Division, the Air Control Commission and the Solid Waste Division from Department of Health and Human Resources. In 1983 additional legislation creating the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) passed the Legislature.



Four of the five original DEQ 30-year employees – Front– Mary Beth Bucher and Terri Gibson. And Rear – Tom Killeen and Michael Vince

On Feb. 1, 1984, under Governor Dave Treen, the Department of Environmental Quality became a reality and Winston Day became its first Secretary.



Mark Stansbury of the DEQ Southeast Regional Office

Five of the original OEA employees are still here at DEQ hard at work. They are: Terri Gibson, management analyst, Mary Beth Bucher, Environmental Program analyst, Tom Killeen, administrator of the Inspection Division, Mark Stansbury, Environmental Scientist in the Underground Storage Tanks Division in the Southeast Regional Office, and Michael Vince, Senior Scientist in the Air Permits Division.

“There have been a lot of changes in 30 years,” said Vince, who transferred to DEQ from Louisiana State University.



DEQ practices what it preaches

Case in point: recycling. When the department decided to convert many of its files to electronic form, a huge store of paper resulted. It filled two warehouses at the Department of Agriculture and Forestry on Florida Boulevard in Baton Rouge. The unneeded paper records were taking up expensive storage space. So a team of eight persons (plus two part-time employees hired specifically for the task) processed 15,880 boxes of files for shredding and recycling. The boxes were loaded onto 292 pallets and sent to Tiger Shredding & Recycling in Baton Rouge.



Ellen Peneguy wraps boxes of records for recycling.

Once shredded, the paper was sold to Kimberly-Clark Corporation (makers of Kleenex) to be recycled and reused. According to Tiger Shredding & Recycling spokesman Josh Goodson, DEQ's file purge comprised 440,000 pounds of paper – 220 tons. That's not counting the cardboard boxes and pallets which were also recycled. Goodson estimates DEQ saved 1,540,00 gallons of water, 902,000 kilowatts of electricity, 3,740 trees and 440 gallons of crude oil by recycling the old files. The process avoided the generation of 13,200 pounds of air pollutants and the files won't take up the 660 cubic yards of landfill the paper would have if it hadn't been recycled.

It was not only environmentally friendly, recycling was economical. "We paid \$5,000 for the entire job," senior record analyst Ellen Peneguy said. "It's usually \$5 per box. They (Tiger Shredding & Recycling) make most of their profit on the other end."

The job began a couple of months ago. It would have been finished sooner, Peneguy said, if not for weather issues that interrupted the work with unscheduled days off. The task was officially completed Feb. 2.

And those recycled products? If you go into a public restroom and wash your hands, the paper hand towel you use to dry your hands may once have been a DEQ file.



Hand towels that are an end product of file recycling



EPA National Air Quality Conference

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency National Air Quality Conference was held in Raleigh, N.C., starting Feb. 10. and was supposed to end Feb. 12. A winter ice and snow storm in the area not only kept last day participants from attending and presenting but forced some to leave early. Others were stranded. Raleigh, and much of the South, got three to four inches of snow and freezing rain and that shut down the airports and many flights were canceled. Some folks were stranded, albeit in a nice hotel, until Sunday.

The air conference drew participants from all over the United States to discuss air quality issues. This year's conference had more than 250 participants. There were many exhibits of air quality monitoring equipment, educational and program ideas and more.

There was a poster session that offered an opportunity for participants who were not presenting to share their ideas. The conference offers many opportunities to network and share ideas. There are two tracks for the breakout sessions – one for forecasting, mapping and monitoring and one for communicating air quality.

Greg Green, director of the Outreach and Information Division in the Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards, and Phil Dickerson, EPA AirNow Program director, opened the plenary session. The session emphasis was on how traffic pollution affects children's health, air quality and physical activity and evaluating the air quality index. There was a focus on the correlation between poor air quality and the kinds of physical activity that people do.

The AirNow Program has become international and there were presentations from AirNow groups in Shanghai, Taiwan and Mexico explaining how their programs work. Since air quality is a global problem, involving other countries in AirNow has been a goal.

After the plenary session, participants went into breakout sessions for the next two days. The conference offered many different topics that included outreach topics such as educational programs, forecasting and new equipment, ozone update, regional forecasting, fracking and its impact on air quality, sensors and community monitoring, and NOAA AQ predictions.



Mike Vince presents a summary of the DEQ Advance Program at the EPA Air Quality Conference



Snow and ice in Raleigh, N.C. kept many conference participants from getting home.

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There was a presentation by Natalie Gallagher and Connor Lydon, San Lorenzo Valley High School students who picked an unpredictable science project called Secrets of San Lorenzo Valley's atmosphere: Vertical Meteorological Measurements. Their experiments included launching weather balloons with equipment to give them monitoring results on a set schedule.

One presentation on Reducing Emissions from Marine Shipping: Local and Global Initiatives was particularly pertinent to our area because of the amount of shipping that travels through Baton Rouge on the Mississippi River.

The conference was scheduled to end at 3:30 p.m. on Feb. 12 but due to the severe weather, the sessions were compressed so that people could leave before the storm hit. Most participants who live to the west were stranded when their flights were canceled.

Presentations will be available soon on the AirNow Web site, www.airnow.gov.

DEQ receives EnviroFlash Award at the EPA National Air Quality Conference

DEQ received an award from EPA and AirNow for the 2013 EnviroFlash Challenge. EnviroFlash is an important component of their air quality awareness program.

EnviroFlash is a free electronic notification system that sends emails and texts about the daily air quality forecast to subscribers. Subscribers can sign up for any level of notification they want from daily notifications to information on days when the air could be unhealthy. An added value to the notification system is that notifications can be sent out when there is an unusual air quality event, such as fires or emergency situations. The public can sign up for the notifications at www.deq.louisiana.gov/enviroflash.

The award from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency says that EPA "proudly recognizes the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality for outstanding performance in promoting community awareness of EnviroFlash, resulting in 479 new subscribers in the 2013 EnviroFlash Challenge."



Award presented to DEQ for outstanding performance promoting EnviroFlash.



Louisiana leader in EPA Advance program nationally

Michael Vince, DEQ Senior Scientist, gave a presentation at the EPA National Air Quality Conference about the EPA Advance Program in Louisiana.

Vince highlighted the areas of the state that have signed on for the program to proactively examine the issues of air quality and work on solutions to keep them out of nonattainment with the EPA National Air Quality Standards. The areas are Shreveport, Monroe, Lake Charles, Lafayette, Houma/Terrebonne, Baton Rouge and New Orleans. He discussed the ways DEQ is helping the areas determine their pollutant sources, including conference calls, visits, assistance in writing their programs and modeling. He demonstrated how the lowering of the EPA standards for ozone and PM 2.5 will affect each area and how the modeling helped each advance group determine pollution sources.

“Through EPA’s Advance Program, LDEQ has worked hard to raise awareness about the impacts of poor air quality and the opportunities local areas have to better ensure their air quality remains healthy,” said Laura Bunte, EPA National Advance Program lead. “LDEQ’s work has resulted in several areas joining the Advance Program and taking steps to reduce ozone.”

The DEQ Advance Program involves public officials, groups and individuals in each area working with DEQ to take steps to improve their air quality and to take responsibility for their own environment.

Public Hearings hosted by DEQ’s Public Participation Group

Whenever a permit application is up for finalization and the facility or the public requests a public hearing, DEQ’s Office of Environmental Services, through the assistance of DEQ’s Public Participation Group, will prepare a public notice announcing the public hearing. The purpose of the hearing is to provide a forum whereby the permit applicant, public officials and the public may provide comments that will be included in the official record regarding the permit application in question. Not all permit applications will include a public hearing; however, one may be requested by the public or by the applicant.

The Public Participation Group publishes the notice in the local newspaper, assists attendees with information and provides a sign-up sheet for those wishing to speak at the hearing. The group also handles all logistical matters, such as securing the location and ensuring that signs, maps, tables, chairs and audio/visual systems are in place.



DEQ Attorney Supervisor Chris Ratcliff serves as the hearing officer at a public hearing in Baker in August 2013

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Once the public notice is published, the hearing is set and the public comment period commences. The hearing is open to the public and anyone may attend and express their opinions in either a written format or verbally in front of those in attendance by signing up to speak. The permit applicant typically gives an opening statement, which is followed by comments from any political officials in attendance. Residents living within a 2-mile radius of the permit site will speak next, followed by those working in the 2-mile radius. Parish residents and anyone else who wishes to speak will get an opportunity to comment. The hearing ends after everyone has had an opportunity to speak.

All comments are compiled, transcribed and included in the official public record. Once all comments have been received by the deadline, DEQ reviews them and prepares responses to each one in a written statement. The final decision is mailed to everyone who signed up to receive it, including the applicant. Anyone can receive a copy of that statement, and all comments are taken into account when the final permit is being evaluated for finalization.

The public forum is established by Louisiana statute and is not a question-and-answer format. It is simply a venue in which anyone may appear to listen to comments and express their opinion for inclusion into the official record.

The public has 30 days in which to voice their support or opposition to the proposed permit, and can submit their comments in person, by mail, email or fax. Citizens may deliver their comments to DEQ's headquarters in Baton Rouge, or to any of DEQ's regional offices located throughout the state.

Written comments concerning a specific permit may be sent to the DEQ Public Participation Group at P.O. Box 4313, Baton Rouge, LA 70821. Those wishing to get on the public notice mailing list may mail a request to DEQ, send an email to: maillistrequest@ldeq.gov, or call (225) 219-3276.

Regional offices cover the state

Headquartered in Louisiana's capital city of Baton Rouge, the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality also maintains several regional offices positioned throughout the state, covering all 64 parishes.

Currently, DEQ maintains 6 regional offices and 2 satellite offices within the state. Since DEQ's mission is to respond to air and water quality issues, solid/hazardous waste concerns and emergency response incidents within a short amount of time, regional offices are a necessity in order to provide adequate and prompt service to any parish in the state.

DEQ environmental scientists and staff members at the regional offices often wear many hats, as all environmental threats or concerns must be addressed at any given time. Emergency response and coordinating with local, parish and state officials is also an important aspect of the regional office mission, as train derailments, facility mishaps, hazardous waste spills, fires and other natural events may occur at any moment.

Past e-newsletters have focused on a DEQ Regional Office in order to give readers an overview on each office's function along with their role in DEQ's mission to protect human health and the environment throughout the state.

This issue spotlights the Northeast Regional Office based in West Monroe:

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NORTHEAST REGIONAL OFFICE

Parishes served: Avoyelles, Caldwell, Catahoula, Concordia, East Carroll, Franklin, Grant, Jackson, La Salle, Union, Madison, Morehouse, Ouachita, Rapides, Richland, Tensas, Union, West Carroll and Winn

The Northeast Regional Office is located at 1825 La. 523 in West Monroe

The Northeast Regional Office is based in West Monroe, with a satellite office in Pineville. Together, both offices are responsible for the 17-parish area in central and northeast Louisiana bordering Arkansas and northwestern Mississippi. The area encompasses the largest land mass in the state.

The office has 21 staff members who are environmental scientists or technical support personnel whose primary mission is to respond to remediation and underground storage tank issues as well as inspections covering air, water and waste. A staff attorney, small business representative and an underground storage tank advisor provide technical support to the supervisors and inspections staff.

“The region has several commercial and residential wastewater treatment plants, which are inspected frequently on a routine basis,” said Casey Head, Environmental Scientist Supervisor. “Air emissions inspections, underground storage tank inspections and hazardous waste inspections are among our primary responsibilities, as well as responding to and investigating all citizen and facility inquiries that may come in.”

In addition, two air monitoring stations (one in Alexandria, and one at the airport in Monroe) are on the region’s weekly inspection schedule. Air monitoring scientists from DEQ inspect the equipment at the stations and review the air monitoring data to ensure that the equipment is fully operational and retrieving the air data accurately.

“Our office also maintains a fleet of boats and an all-terrain vehicle, which allows us immediate access to any of the several bodies of water within the northeast quadrant of the state,” said Larry Baldwin, Manager for DEQ’s Northwest and Northeast Regional Offices. “Since our coverage area is vast and varied, our office may share personnel and equipment with other regional offices as environmental needs dictate.”



The Northeast Regional Office is located at 1825 La. 523 in West Monroe.



Casey Head, Environmental Scientist Supervisor at the Northeast Regional Office, reviews a facility compliance inspection report.

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The office maintains a strong relationship with both the Arkansas and Mississippi Departments of Environmental Quality, as needs arise regarding any environmentally related matters or concerns in the Ark-La-Miss region that would necessitate a multi-state response.

Burn Wise – Burn the right wood, the right way!

This has been an unusually cold winter and many people are using their fireplace more. Did you know that by changing the way you burn you can save money, reduce air pollution and protect your health?

Here are a few tips to burn wise and be a good environmental neighbor:

1. Season all firewood for at least six months. Seasoned wood burns hotter, cuts fuel consumption and reduces smoke. Do not burn wet wood.
2. Choose the right wood – hardwoods are best. Never burn trash or treated wood that can emit air pollutants.
3. Start your fire with clean newspaper or dry kindling.
4. Don't let your fire smolder as it increases air pollution and clean out your ashes so they don't clog intake vents.





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DEQ On The Move



DEQ employees wear red for DEQ Go Red For Women Day in support of the Heart Association.



Emily Scott Barlett and Marissa Jimenez, DEQ employees, sell goodies and auction cakes at the DEQ bake Sale for the Heart Association. The event raised \$719.40.



Greg Waldron and Al Hindrichs, DEQ environmental scientists, show a replica of Walnut Bayou, demonstrating river and coastal dynamics, to science teachers at the Louisiana Environmental Educational Symposium in Shreveport.



Gen. Russel Honore, Green Army, presents to the Louisiana Environmental Educational Symposium in Shreveport.



Who's Who At DEQ?



Courtney Burdette - Attorney - Legal Division

Burdette, born and raised in Baton Rouge, earned a B.A. in English from Howard University in Washington, D.C., and a J.D. from Louisiana State University, Paul M. Hebert Law Center. Courtney has been employed with DEQ since January 2014. Prior to her employment with DEQ, Courtney was employed with the State as an Attorney with the Louisiana Board of Ethics, and as an Assistant Attorney General with the Louisiana Department of Justice, as well as serving as a federal judicial law clerk for the Middle District of Louisiana.

Spencer B. Bowman – Attorney – Legal Division

Bowman is a Baton Rouge native who obtained his Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology at Louisiana State University, with a minor in Business Administration. Bowman received his Juris Doctor degree from the Southern University Law Center. Prior to joining the General Law Section in DEQ Legal Division, Spencer gained experience in the areas of contracts, property law, workers' compensation, successions and family law. Spencer's favorite pastimes are golfing, traveling, spending time with family and helping others in a time of need.



Jill R. Carter – Attorney - Legal Division

Before joining the DEQ legal team, Carter received a Biology Education degree from McNeese State University and a J.D. from Southern University Law Center. She worked in the chemical industry for 15 years and for three years in private practice in Vidalia before coming to DEQ.



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Louisiana Department Of Environmental Quality's Fourth Quarter Summaries

4th Quarter 2013 Enforcement Actions:

<http://www.deq.louisiana.gov/portal/tabid/225/Default.aspx>

4th Quarter 2013 Settlement Agreements:

<http://www.deq.louisiana.gov/portal/tabid/2838/Default.aspx>

4th Quarter 2013 Air Permits:

<http://www.deq.louisiana.gov/portal/tabid/2922/Default.aspx>

4th Quarter 2013 Water Permits:

<http://www.deq.louisiana.gov/portal/tabid/2899/Default.aspx>

4th Quarter 2013 Solid and Hazardous Waste Permits:

<http://www.deq.louisiana.gov/portal/tabid/2586/Default.aspx>

