DISCOVER DEQ
LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY NEWSLETTER

November 2014 Issue Number: 34

What's Inside?

Happy Thanksgiving!

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DEQ participates in 18th Annual Chem Friends Expo in Gonzales

In early November, environmental scientists from the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality participated in Chem Friends, a science-based demonstration held for middle school students at the Gonzales Civic Center in Ascension Parish.

Celebrating its 18th year, Chem Friends hosted more than 1,800 6th grade students at the two day expo, with 15 local businesses and organizations participating. Along with DEQ, which has participated in the event continuously since it's inception, participating organizations included BASF, the Gonzales Fire Department, Southern University, Shell Chemical, Athlon Solutions, Air Products, Westlake Chemical, Honeywell Geismar, Methanex, Potash Corporation, OxyChem, CF Industries, Rubicon and Motiva Enterprises.

The event is a science exhibition that provides participating organizations an opportunity to interact with students and provide them with hands-on instruction on a specific chemistry process. The event's show-and-tell structure allows organizations to demonstrate a science-based aspect of what they do in a unique, fun way, while keeping students engaged and physically involved.

From left, Linda Brown Hardy, Greta Flowers, Minta Canelas and Curt Auzenne staff DEQ's "kitchen chemistry" demonstration station during the first day of the expo.

After participants set up their demonstration booths around the auditorium, sixth grade students from Ascension Parish schools arrived. They were provided protective glasses and a safety orientation before proceeding to their first station. Students were divided into small groups and guided to each station by student volunteers from nearby St. Amant High School.

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DEQ Environmental Scientist Curt Auzenne demonstrates where various household chemicals fall on the pH scale to students from St. Amant Middle School.

Each station is hosted by a business or organization that provides a science-based demonstration or a participatory activity where students can personally assist in conducting mock experiments. Demonstrations typically involve basic chemistry processes in an easy-to-understand presentation.

DEQ's demonstration was based on a "kitchen chemistry" concept. Various chemicals and products that are commonly used in households were tested to determine their position on the pH scale. Everyday products such as ammonia, baby shampoo, fabric softener, lemon juice, carbonated soda, aspirin, glass cleaner, baking soda, dish soap, water, antacid tablets, vinegar and orange juice were placed on the display table for the students to observe and test. The DEQ participants used boiled cabbage water in a series of test tubes as an indicator to determine whether a certain product is actually an acid, base or neutral.

Upon arrival at the station, students were divided into two teams in a competition centered on which team could give the most correct answers as each product was tested by adding a few drops of the product to the test tube. Curt Auzenne, DEQ Environmental Scientist, offered the participants a chance to present a hypothesis, or prediction, on whether a certain item would be a base, acid or neutral based on its interaction with the cabbage water. The water turns pink if the product is acidic, green if it's a base, or stays purple if it's neutral.

Each group of students received approximately 12 minutes at each station, for about four rotations per group. Variety was the key. Each participating organization's demonstration showcased a different aspect of chemistry and was focused on raising awareness and interest in chemistry and how it impacts our daily lives.

"Chem Friends offers a rare opportunity for students to step out of the traditional classroom setting and receive hands-on instruction on a variety of aspects of chemistry in an entertaining way," said Auzenne. "What a student sees here may spark an interest in science, potentially leading that student into a career in science." DEQ participants included Curt Auzenne, Linda Brown Hardy, Marissa Jimenez, Tomeka Prioleau, Minta Canelas, Connie Payne and Greta Flowers.

Environmental Scientist Marissa Jimenez (left) tests a chemical's pH as Connie Payne (right) looks on.

All participating students received a door prize bag as they exited, and 11 middle schools were in attendance. The two-day event was followed with a community night from 5 to 7 p.m. which allowed students to return with a parent or other adult to learn more about chemistry and to see any demonstrations they missed.

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Vegetable Oil used for groundwater remediation project in Ouachita Parish

For the past four decades, DEQ's Northeast Regional Office in West Monroe has been monitoring a 29.5-acre rural section of Ouachita Parish, operated by MacAllen Chemical. Located about three miles south of Monroe off Harmon Johnson Road, the site's soil and groundwater were impacted through hazardous material releases in the 1970s. DEQ and remediation contractors have been working diligently to bring the site back up to acceptable, uncontaminated conditions.

Two 21,000-gallon Baker Tanks process groundwater at Geosyntec's biobarrier site number 1 in Monroe.

The history of the site dates back to a commercial chemical treatment, storage and handling/disposal facility that was operated by Browning-Ferris Industries Chemical Services Inc. (BFICSI). MacAllen Chemical took over in the early 1980s. During that time, chemicals were stored in bulk tanks, surface impoundments contained truck wash water and equipment, and various waste chemicals were treated and/or disposed on-site. Those activities led to the release of 1,2-Dichloropropane and 1,2-Dichloroethane, contaminating soil and groundwater.

During BFISCI's closure, a chemical storage tank was removed. Subsequent monitoring identified the presence of volatile organic compounds in the soil and groundwater. DEQ began working with the property owners to assess and take corrective action. Soon a groundwater monitoring network featuring a water recovery and treatment unit was installed, and extensive remediation efforts, conducted by contractors, have taken various forms over the years. Those efforts are ongoing.

Geosyntec Consultants, Inc. is currently conducting operations and is the latest in a series of consultants who have had a hand in remediating the site over the years. In 2011, Geosyntec began a five-year bioremediation project, leading to two enhanced in situ biodegradation pilot tests that were conducted to evaluate the feasibility of treating the groundwater plume by injecting a nutrient source. To reduce groundwater degradation in a safe, environmentally-friendly manner, Geosyntec looked at adding a non-hazardous material, such as a food source, to reduce groundwater degradation. Through a series of initial tests, food grade emulsified vegetable oil was shown as a viable, non-toxic component in the injection process.

Geosyntec's plan involves the injection of a one percent solution of the vegetable oil into the well along the top and bottom of the aquifer. It's use as a nutrient source is designed to enhance degradation of contaminants in the groundwater. Tests showed that the vegetable oil injection, withdrawal and recirculation plan was effective, and performance monitoring is currently being conducted to identify any trends. An innovative process, the biobarrier plan is one of the most comprehensive vegetable oil injection projects ever conducted in the United States.

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While the location is rural, six adjacent residential areas – predominantly farmland – have been impacted. All of the citizens and livestock in the area are using public water from the municipal water system, so they are not facing a direct impact as the aquifer undergoes the restorative process. A study of topography and water flow indicates that groundwater is moving in an east/southeast direction away from the Ouachita River, so one of the team's many objectives is to halt the eastern migration of the plume to eliminate any further damage to the soil and water. DEQ's oversight also entails safeguarding clean wells around the plume and ensuring that the biobarrier project is operating in accordance with the guidelines.

Several pump and injection well locations at the site are in place as part of the groundwater bioremediation process.

Proven, existing technologies and new, innovative technologies have been put into practice at the site. The current project is innovative and combines older, ex situ processes and methodologies with a system of new, in situ bioaugmentation techniques.

Initially set up by Herst, the current project consists of three bioremediation sites, with a group of injection wells and extraction wells at each site, for a total of more than 45 wells. Each well is affixed with a flow meter that gauges the amount of water flowing in and out, and rates are checked to ensure that the process is in sync.

Ongoing injection activity takes place in an in situ process, where water is treated on site. During the process, contaminated water is extracted from one well, processed and fed through a Baker Tank where impurities are removed. From the tank, clean water is fed into another well. The system runs for 24 hours a day and is generally conducted in monthlong stages.

Coupled with that is the ex situ system of pump-and-treat, where an air stripper and carbon vessel are used in the removal of contaminants. In the process, the contaminated groundwater is extracted from a well and sent into an air stripper where air is pumped in and volatile compounds are removed via the carbon vessel. Technology plays a role in helping the project run smoothly, as any trip or spike in the well readings triggers a signal to an operator's phone, which immediately alerts him of the problem.

Overseeing the site are environmental scientist Stephen Brown and geologist Steven Archibald, who are both based out of DEQ's Northeast Regional Office. Early into their involvement in the project, both met with the nearby residents to explain the process and answer questions. Brown was a key player in implementing the off-site investigations, and he worked with the consultants and responsible party in the upgrade of the groundwater treatment and recovery system. Archibald was instrumental in executing the additional off-site investigations, installing off-site monitoring wells, working with the consultants and responsible party on pilot test implementation. He assisted in applying the enhanced in situ biodegradation groundwater remedy. This technology encourages growth and reproduction of microorganisms in order to enhance organic matter biodegradation, ultimately removing that matter from the groundwater.

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The contaminated site rests upon a silty-sand, gravel and clay stretch – the Mississippi River Valley Alluvium. A series of low-permeability clays underlie the Alluvium, protecting the Sparta Formation, which is a vital aquifer system in north central Louisiana. Part of DEQ's mission is to continue protecting the aquifer from contamination. "The ultimate goal of the pump-and-treat system is to reclaim product and minimize contaminants going to the air or into a landfill," said Archibald. "Both in situ and ex situ processes have been effective so far in the remediation process. In particular, the nutrient injection activities have been successful in stimulating the native bacterial species, which in turn co-metabolize and ultimately degrade the contaminants in the groundwater."

Geosyntec's current groundwater recirculation project ran for about four weeks through October 2014 and is currently undergoing a performance monitoring phase to identify any trends or areas that need improvement. Geosyntec's biobarrier plan is currently on a five-year design model, with two years remaining as the company continues to monitor the progress and extract groundwater samples for analysis.

To increase efficiency in groundwater sampling, Passive Diffusion Bag (PDB) monitoring is being used at the site. PDB is a polyethylene bag filled with distilled water that is used to pull a sample from a well, and its implementation has been shown to reduce sampling time from about 3 days to one. This streamlined process saves money and makes the sampling effort less labor intensive.

DEQ Geologist Steven Archibald examines the site's groundwater pump-and-treat system.

The overall system has undergone a few changes in order to adapt to various issues that have arisen.

The groundwater recovery and treatment unit was upgraded in early 2010 to address the presence of dense non-aqueous phase liquids, or contaminants, in groundwater. Permanent wells were recently installed as an added method of gathering sampling data to ensure that no further contaminated groundwater moves off-site. Further, last summer, a groundwater remedial design was approved by DEQ, with additional injection points to be installed in 2015.

Geosyntec has performed additional off-site investigations to assess groundwater conditions, installed the sentry well system, conducted numerous treatability studies and implemented a remediation plan.

While the overall remediation has been comprehensive and time consuming, DEQ continues to see progress being made. "Geosyntec has done a very good job of addressing the groundwater issues to date, and we have seen significant reductions in the constituents of concern at the site," said Brown.

With the elaborate work being conducted on and under the ground, it is imperative that any removed contaminants are not transferred to the air or to clean water or soil. To mitigate this, MacAllen has been submitting discharge monitoring reports to DEQ, and DEQ continues to conduct inspections to confirm that no further contamination to soil and groundwater arises.

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The biodegradation injection activities and treatment of the off-site groundwater contaminant plume will continue for a few years until all monitoring wells show that the constituents in the groundwater have steadily remained below DEQ's remediation standards over the course of an entire year. Once this is demonstrated, the site will be identified with a "No Further Action At This Time" determination by DEQ.

Early Warning System helps protect the Mississippi River as a drinking source

The Mississippi River is the drinking water source for more than 1.6 million people in Louisiana. The river is also a busy shipping lane where barges and ships carry all sorts of cargoes – including dangerous chemicals. The river bisects the area between Baton Rouge and New Orleans where the banks are lined with chemical plants, refineries, sewage treatment plants and other industries, many of which have the potential to release harmful substances into the river. More than 350 industrial and municipal facilities are situated adjacent to the Mississippi River within the state of Louisiana.

To combat any threat to drinking water drawn from the river, DEQ, potable water works and industries along the river entered into a cooperative agreement in 1986 to found the Early Warning Organic Compound Detection System (EWOCDS). DEQ agreed to purchase, install and maintain gas chromatographs, accessories and data transmitting devices and in turn, each monitoring site provides lab space, utilities and manpower to analyze samples.

"It's the partnership through the department, which consists of about three chemical plants and four waterworks," said Patrick Augustine, DEQ environmental scientist 3. "The program was a bit larger before I came on board, but a few plants have dropped out."

Augustine oversees EWOCDS. It's basically a one-man operation, but he has backups. His work with EWOCDS consists of regular inspections of the equipment at each site and providing standards for the technicians. "I make up the standards and take them to the site. Some sites are capable of making up their own standards," he said.

"What I have is a gas chromatograph with tandem photo ion detectors," Augustine said. The equipment is permanently fixed in place, but not all sites have exactly the same setup. "They are all slightly different from each other, depending on the facility, the personnel and the level of expertise they have," he said.

The equipment can test for target chemicals in quantities as low as one part per billion, Augustine said. "Most sites get two samples a day," he said. "Two (sites) sample pretty much continuously."

The equipment tests for some halogenated organic compounds, chlorinated hydrocarbons, trihalomethanes, to name a few, vinyl chloride, benzene and styrene – about 28 substances in all -- Augustine said. "It's basically the EPA's drinking water method."

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Patrick Augustine checks equipment at the Vacherie Water Works station of the EWOCDS.

Under that method, highly volatile organic compounds with low water solubility are extracted (purged) from the sample matrix by bubbling an inert gas through an aqueous sample. Purged sample components are trapped in a tube containing suitable sorbent materials. When purging is complete, the sorbent tube is heated and back flushed with helium to desorb trapped sample components onto a capillary gas chromatography column. The column is temperature programmed to separate the method analytes which are then detected with a photoionization detector (PID) and a halogen specific detector. Results are then interpreted by personnel at the testing stations and reported to Augustine.

"If they see something in there that sparks their interest, I want to take a look at it," Augustine said. If that sample turns out to be something of concern, he contacts water system officials. "I let them (water system officials) know. It depends on the compound. There are different action levels for different compounds. Depending on the compound, I'd tell them that we need to take a closer look at that."

Augustine has a call list he uses to alert different stakeholders. He will call parish EOCs in the event of suspicious reading. "I'd inform them that there is something in the river and what we think it is," he said. "This is more of an alert system."

Augustine maintains the EWOCDS equipment at the testing stations, but over time some replacement equipment is necessary. Assistant Secretary for Environmental Compliance Cheryl Nolan recently stepped in and added EWOCDS needs to a settlement DEQ reached with ExxonMobil in January. ExxonMobil paid $2,329,000 to fund beneficial environmental projects (BEPs) and a spill countermeasures program and to pay civil penalties to DEQ under the settlement agreement finalized Jan. 9. Of that amount, $250,000 went to EWOCDS as a BEP to fund equipment upgrades at sampling stations in Luling, Vacherie and ExxonMobil Baton Rouge Refinery. New gas chromatographs and a long list of equipment for each site were paid for with the funds.

Nolan said she hopes more improvements to the system can be funded in the near future.

For more information about EWODCS, contact the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality, Office of Environmental Compliance, Inspection Division at **(225) 219-3600** or email **deqinspection@LA.GOV**.

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Geographical Response Plan meeting held at the Port of Greater Baton Rouge

Oil spills and hazardous substance spills can be an issue in Louisiana and being prepared to respond to them is very important to mitigate the environmental and human damage.

DEQ Senior Environmental Scientist Jeff Dauzat (left) and Coast Guard Captain Phil Schifflin listen to a spill response contingency presentation at the meeting.

On Oct. 17, representatives from the U.S. Coast Guard, the Louisiana Oil Spill Coordinator's Office (LOSCO), the U.S. National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration and DEQ were among the organizations who met at the Port of Greater Baton Rouge in Port Allen to participate in a kickoff meeting to discuss the importance of contingency plans regarding oil and hazardous substance spills along the lower Mississippi River.

The agenda centered on the goal of establishing a Geographic Response Plan in the coordination of spills/releases in or along the Mississippi River south of U.S. 190 to the Gulf of Mexico – part of the river jurisdiction of the U.S. Coast Guard. The participating agencies met to discuss the significance of formulating spill response communications and coordinating the logistics between responding organizations, parishes and stakeholders in southeastern Louisiana along the river. To establish the Geographical Response Plan, several multi-parish meetings are being held.

In attendance was Capt. Phil Schifflin, Captain of the Port and Federal On-Scene Coordinator for U.S. Coast Guard Sector New Orleans, who reiterated the goal of getting all parties engaged in the discussion and planning process in order to ensure the highest level of preparedness in the inevitability of a future incident. "The idea of these meetings is to introduce the process to everyone and invite stakeholders to participate so that procedures can be instituted and consolidated," said Captain Schifflin. "The Geographical Response Plan is a playbook on how to correct shortfalls and identify and protect sensitive areas so we can improve the response capability and be better prepared for future incidents. The first 24 to 48 hours during a spill are critical, so it's important to prioritize what is most sensitive."

Additional representatives from the Coast Guard spoke, as well as David Gisclair from the Louisiana Oil Spill Coordinator's Office, who provided a synopsis of the history of oil spill regulations in Louisiana.

Key areas of discussion detailed the necessity of logistical management and organization when a spill occurs. Moving equipment and personnel must be coordinated as swiftly and as seamlessly as possible in order to contain the release and protect human health, wildlife, aquatic life and soil and water conditions in and around the spill. Sensitive areas must be quickly identified and prioritized – such as the protection of public drinking water and protecting endangered species. Next, a response strategy must be established and tactical protection plans must be implemented. Questions such as how much oil containment boom is needed and the identification of resources (boats, personnel, boom,

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etc.) need to be addressed and equipment must be rapidly employed. DEQ, fire departments, parish emergency response representatives and the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries work together with LOSCO, the Coast Guard, the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness and other participants to marshal those needed resources as they respond to the event.

Tom Killeen, Administrator of DEQ's Inspection Division; and Jeff Dauzat, DEQ Staff Environmental Scientist, also addressed those in attendance, echoing how essential it is to communicate and work from a singular standard operating plan so that all concerned parties are on the same page throughout the entire spill response, recovery and post-recovery phases.

Tom Killeen, Administrator of DEQ's Inspection Division, gives an overview on the Early Warning Organic Chemical Detection System at the meeting.

Both touched on the critical nature of the initial response. "The immediate priority in a spill or release is to quickly isolate the spill in order to keep it from spreading," said Dauzat. "Containment is vital and must be handled rapidly so that any potential destruction to human health and the environment can be minimized or eliminated. This must be done ASAP – in many occasions, even before the incident command is fully set up – so that personnel and resources arriving at the scene encounter no delays in addressing the immediate threat."

Killeen gave an overview of the EWOCDS, or the Early Warning Organic Chemical Detection System, as a means of facilitating response time and its importance as a potential component to the contingency plan. "DEQ is currently using EWOCDS and adding funding to the system as a viable resource in the detection of chemicals as it relates to situations involving hazardous material spills," Killeen said. "Its inclusion in the final plan would offer a level of support to the overall response."

Formal discussions regarding the establishment of spill response plans date back to the early 1950s, with enhancements made in the 1990s when the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 was enacted by Congress in response to the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill. The Act was enacted in order to mitigate and preclude civil liability from oil spills, stating that companies must establish plans to prevent, contain and clean up oil spills. Under the Act and subsequent legislation, direction was given for states to establish area contingency plans. As a result, the Louisiana Oil Spill Prevention and Response Act was created, spurring the advent of the National Oil and Hazardous Substance Pollution Contingency Plan which defined the process in greater detail.

Area contingency plans are broken down even further, consisting of state/local plans, facility response plans, federal agency internal plans and vessel response plans that all must coexist and function in a manner that supports a centralized spill protocol. The Geographical Response Plan is a component of the area contingency plan, which came about in the wake of lessons learned from the 2010 Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill. Specifically, previous oil

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response plans were not widely known among local, state and federal partners; previous plans were unfamiliar to port partners and lacked alignment among local, state and federal partners; and sensitive sites were not identified.

"These planning sessions are vital for getting participating agencies, organizations and stakeholders together to discuss their operational strategies and methodologies regarding oil spill or hazardous material accident response," said Dauzat. "It is imperative that each party communicates their response strategy so that everyone can work from one standard operating plan. Doing so eliminates confusion, streamlines the process and better informs all parties concerned on the necessary steps to take when an incident occurs."

The ideal Geographical Response Plan is one that is created out of the input from emergency responders and stakeholders, where nearly no stone is left unturned as it relates to spill response. Supporting that endeavor through outreach, the New Orleans Area Contingency Plan committee meets at least three times a year and conducts ongoing visits to parishes throughout the state to discuss wildlife response, volunteer coordination, firefighting, communications plans and logistics in the event a spill along the Mississippi River occurs.

Planning will focus on coastal southeastern Louisiana and the Mississippi River up to the East and West Baton Rouge Parish lines, as well as areas of the Atchafalaya Basin and Lake Maurepas.

With additional meetings on the horizon, the Geographical Response Plan is expected to be finalized in the spring of 2015.

DEQ participates in Air and Water Management Association meeting

DEQ Secretary Peggy Hatch, EPA Region 6 Administrator Ron Curry and DEQ Assistant Secretary Tegan Treadaway were among the speakers at the opening session of the Air and Waste Management Association meeting at the Baton Rouge Marriot on Oct. 28.

Curry pointed to the necessity of maintaining a good working relationship with the states. Curry said the federal agency has built a trusting relationship with DEQ and other licensing agencies in Louisiana. "It's important that we have a new era of relationships with the state agencies we work with," Curry said. "It seems simple."

Curry is a frequent visitor to the Bayou State, he said. "I've been to Louisiana over 40 times since I took over (two years ago)," he said. Between 62 percent and 68 percent of the oil produced in the United States comes from states in EPA's Region 6, Curry said. So much activity brings an "opportunity to do things right," he said.

DEQ Secretary Peggy Hatch addresses the attendees at the AWMA meeting.

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Hatch offered a list of interests currently occupying DEQ personnel, including commenting on the 111(d) proposal from EPA to lower carbon emissions. Section 111(d) is a state-based program for existing sources. The EPA establishes guidelines. The states then design programs that fit in those guidelines and get the needed reductions.

Hatch said it is a busy time at the agency with work going on with permits, tracking odors, remediation and enforcement.

Treadaway gave a presentation at the plenary session that summarized many of the initiatives and areas of concern in air, water and solid waste.

Think green for the Holidays

Tis the season to be jolly" and tis the season to create more waste and garbage than any other. Louisiana, like the rest of the nation, produces more garbage in December than any other month. A little planning ahead of time can reduce the amount of trash that goes to the landfills. Reuse can even produce useful items.

When you prepare for the coming holidays, think green: reduce, reuse and recycle.

Wrapping paper is frequently not recyclable so try some other innovative ideas. Wrap a gift in a scarf, bandana, dishtowel or cloth shopping bag. Newspaper comics and flyers can be reused and are recyclable. Reusing old materials can be creative and make an attractive package. Last year's Christmas and holiday cards can be used in crafts and as ornaments.

Before the holidays is a perfect time to clean out some of the clutter and unused items in your home. If you have outgrown toys and clothing, consider donating them to charitable organizations that reuse them. Discarded electronics (computers, copiers, fax machines, printers and monitors) may be donated to a local nonprofit, parent-teacher association or the Capital Area Corporate Recycling Council which provides computers to schools, families and nonprofits. Visit their website at **www.cacrc.com** for details. One man's clutter is another person's treasure.

Your Christmas tree and its trimmings are another way to take the environment into account, Purchasing or replacing old incandescent tree lights with energy efficient LED lights saves energy and money. The old ones can be recycled at **www.holidayleds.com**.

If you buy an artificial tree it doesn't have to be discarded. If you decide on a live tree, you can plant it after the holidays. Cut trees, usually collected in early January, are ground up into compost or mulch. You can find information about seasonal pickups and recycling at the East Baton

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Rouge Parish Recycling website: **http://brgov.com/recycle**. Many parishes will have programs to recycle Christmas trees. But to recycle a tree, you have to be sure it is prepared correctly. If you have a cut tree, remember that tinsel, flocking and decorations must be removed before recycling.

When purchasing gifts, always check the recycled content and the life of the gift. Sometimes, donating to a charity, non-profit or buying a green, locally produced gift or giving a homemade heart gift fits the environmental bill.

Recycle packaging materials such as cardboard and peanuts and recycle used batteries. For information on recycling foam peanuts, or if you are a retailer interested in foam peanut recycling, go to **www.loosefillpackaging.com/hotline**. You can also save them for reuse yourself, and most packing stores will accept them since they are reusable. Buy rechargeable batteries for toys, cameras and gadgets. When those batteries no longer hold a charge, call the Rechargeable Battery Recycling Corporation at **800-8-battery**, or go to their website at **www.rbrc.org** for information on the nearest battery-recycling drop off location. Remember that most cardboard and paper can be recycled as can many types of plastic and foil.

Have a safe holiday season and remember to never burn wrapping paper or Christmas trees in the fireplace. For more recycling ideas, go to: **www.deq.louisiana.gov/recycling**.

Contestants pace themselves during the first minute of the contest. From left, Kenny Kimball, Travis Laurent, Roy Andermann, David Seymour, Alexis Starr and Charlie Lato.

DEQ supports United Way with hot dog eating

On the eve of Halloween, DEQ employees in the Galvez building in downtown Baton Rouge got into the spirit by participating in a costume contest and a hot dog eating contest – all to raise money for the United Way.

Taking a page from the Nathan's annual hot dog eating contest held every July 4th at Coney Island, DEQ's hot dog event was a scaled down version of the spectacle – with less fanfare and mess.

Onlookers gathered during lunchtime in the conference center break room for an opportunity to witness the wild display of gluttony. The duration to consume the franks (buns included!) was five minutes. Six participants submitted a $5 donation to United Way to have the honor of sitting at the table for an attempt at the grand prize: a filled belly and a month of free first floor premium parking in the Galvez parking garage.

Water was provided for dipping of the buns to facilitate easier passage into the stomach, and condiments were available to those who so desired. After five minutes of bloated competition, Kenny Kimball, Environmental Scientist

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in the Air Assessment Division, was awarded the grand prize, consuming a personal best of 10 hot dogs. This marked his seventh consecutive championship win, and he trumped his last year's total of eight franks. "The competition this year has really stepped up, but these young people still let an old man beat them," Kimball said. Kimball wasn't revealing his winning secret, although he admitted to eyeing the competition, making a point to stay one dog ahead of his top rival. With that formidable plan, he edged out contender David Seymour from the Air Enforcement Division, who ate nine hot dogs and won the second place prize of a $20 gift certificate from Walmart. Third place went to Charlie Lato from the Single Point of Contact group, who consumed eight hot dogs and took home a $15 gift certificate to Raising Cane's chicken fingers. The other participants included Travis Laurent, Alexis Starr and Roy Andermann.

The event was part of DEQ's annual fundraising festivities, with lunch including $2 hot dogs, chili and cheese extra, with all proceeds going to the United Way as part of their yearly drive. Complementary soft drinks were provided.

Lunch tickets went into the hat for entrance into drawings for door prizes held periodically throughout the afternoon.

Louisiana Federal Capital Credit Union provided the door prizes, with Honey Baked Ham donating two free sandwich cards. Hot dog wieners were supplied by Fresh Market on Perkins Road in Baton Rouge.

Halloween costume contest for United Way

You might call DEQ's Halloween Costume Contest a pig success.

This year's competition was won by Lina Saale, who works in Waste Permits, who came decked out as "Chilly Miss Piggy." The event was held Oct. 30 in the Oliver Pollock Room of the Galvez Building and benefited the agency's United Way fundraising push. Saale won a month's VIP parking in the Galvez Garage with her swine couture.

Second place winner Emily Barlett from Communications came as a Hogwarts student from the Harry Potter books and movies. Barlett's magic getup won her a $20 gift certificate from Domino's Pizza.

Third place was shared by Wanda Ballou and Bridget Jones of Remediation, who came as "Bratz Witch Dolls." The witchy winning duo shared a $15 Dairy Queen gift certificate.

Contestants pose in costume contest. From left, Emily Barlett, Lina Saale, Wanda Ballou and Bridget Jones

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Who's Who At DEQ?

Ashlie LeBlanc, Inspection Division, Office of Environmental Compliance

A native of Houma, LeBlanc graduated from the University of New Orleans with a Bachelor of Science degree in biology and a minor in chemistry. She was hired as an environmental scientist in the Lockport office and trained in air quality, and in waste tire and asbestos inspections.

LeBlanc married her high school sweetheart and has two children, Dawson and Sophia Rose. While she enjoyed working in the Lockport office for her first year, her husband went back to school, so they relocated to Prairieville so he could study Industrial engineering at LSU. LeBlanc transferred from the Lockport office to the Capital Regional Office as an inspector for air quality, waste tires and asbestos.

She is enjoying her job, her coworkers and this new chapter in her life. She says that working for DEQ has made the transition easier and said "I'm very grateful to be part of such a great department."

Lisa Miller, Environmental Project Analyst, Nonpoint Source Program

Lisa Miller has approximately 23 years of state service. Of that tenure, about 20 years was spent in Contracts & Grants Division, Office of Management and Finance. Miller recently took a detour through OEC/AD/Emergency Response and gained a broader view of the State of Louisiana and the dedication behind LDEQ's ER Responders and the Single Point of Contact (SPOC) never-ending, 24/7 hard work.

With her love for Contracts and Grants, she now found herself a natural fit for the Office of the Secretary/ BCOID/Nonpoint Source Program, where she now administers multiple grants and associated contracts and purchase orders. She is surrounded by a hard-working team of scientists: Deputy Secretary Dr. Alex Appeaning, Administrator Bijan Sharafkhani, Manager Gwen Berthelot, Rhyshima Parms-Green, Karen Vidrine, Tiffany Warner, Gregory Waldron, Andy Venuto, and Supervisor Crisalda Adams -- all striving to keep Louisiana Watersheds safe to drink and swim in.

"It's a pleasure being a part of such a great group," Miller said.

Sophia Ong, Environmental Scientist III, Inspection Division, Northwest Regional Office

Sophia Ong has worked at DEQ since April 2012. She began her career here as an Environmental Scientist I in air media for the Inspection Division in the Northwest Regional Office (NWRO). Ong was promoted to Environmental Scientist III in April 2014 and works as an inspector in the NWRO where she performs air compliance, asbestos and waste tire inspections, responds to spill incidents and citizen complaints and is the weekend rotation for emergency response for spills and environmental concerns.

"My duties are to have expertise in air media, provide guidance to fellow staff members and to better inform the general public on matters regarding air quality regulations," Ong said.

Ong holds a Bachelor of Science in Biology, an Associate of Science in Chemistry and an Associate of Arts in Psychology, all from Purdue University.

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3rd Quarter 2014 Enforcement Actions:
http://www.deq.louisiana.gov/portal/DIVISIONS/Enforcement/EnforcementActions.aspx

3rd Quarter 2014 Settlement Agreements:
http://www.deq.louisiana.gov/portal/DIVISIONS/Enforcement/SettlementAgreements.aspx

3rd Quarter 2014 Air Permits:
http://www.deq.louisiana.gov/portal/tabid/2922/Default.aspx

3rd Quarter 2014 Water Permits:
http://www.deq.louisiana.gov/portal/tabid/2899/Default.aspx

3rd Quarter 2014 Solid and Hazardous Waste Permits:
http://www.deq.louisiana.gov/portal/divisions/wastepermits.aspx