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DEQ loan to fund Gonzales sewer system improvements

EQ Secretary Peggy Hatch came with a big check when she visited Gonzales Feb. 12. Big smiles greeted her when she got there. The secretary, accompanied by Deputy Secretary Alex Appeaning and DEQ Business and Community Administrator Bijan Sharafkhani, handed over a ceremonial mock-up of a \$15.17 million check that symbolized the State Revolving Fund loan the agency has extended to the city.



FROM LEFT: Gonzales interim City Councilwoman Barbara Duhe, Gonzales Councilman Kenny Matassa, Gonzales Mayor Barney Arceneaux, DEQ Secretary Peggy Hatch, Gonzales interim City Councilman David Guitreau, DEQ Deputy Secretary Alex Appeaning, Gonzales Councilman-elect Neil Bourque and Glenn Shaheen of GSA Engineering.

With Gonzales Mayor Barney Arceneaux, other officials and members of the press looking on, Hatch made the ceremonial presentation. The money will fund improvements to the city's sewer system, upgrades that Appeaning said would enable valuable economic development to go forward while at the same time providing equally valuable protection for the environment. The projects to be paid for with the federally funded, low-interest loan (.95 percent annually) include the construction of an equalization basin/aerated lagoon treatment facility adjacent to the existing wastewater treatment plant, rehabilitating portions of the sewer collection system and correcting infiltration and inflow experienced with the system.

Planned improvements are the installation of 12,200 linear feet of slip lining, 10, 12 and 15 inches in diameter; lining 25 manholes with an approximate depth of 8 feet and 35 manholes with an approximate depth of 18 feet; and performing 20 point repairs on various sewer line diameters, 10 to 15 inches.





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Arceneaux praised DEQ's efforts to aid the city's push to improve its water quality. Gonzales City Councilman Kenny Matassa echoed the mayor's appreciation for DEQ, and said the money will help the city increase its sewage handing capacity to meet demand of rapid growth in the area. "You have to always work to stay ahead of the game. That's why this loan will be so good for us," Matassa said.

Gonzales City Engineer Jackie Baumann said the city is very grateful to DEQ for the funding opportunity and is planning a three-phased project starting with the rehabilitation of some of the older gravity mains – and those contracts have already been awarded. The second phase will expand the treatment facility and accommodate growth, and the final phase will be an expansion of the sewage infrastructure into the southern part of the city, she said.

GeauxRide, rideshare program launches soon in Baton Rouge



 ${\it Mike\ McDaniel,\ BRCAC\ facilitator,\ explains\ GeauxRide\ to\ group.}$

ired of sitting in traffic? Weary of a long commute and parking problems? Wish you could reduce the wear and tear on your car and your mood? Would you like to be able to read the newspaper or finish some work on the way to work? GeauxRide, a rideshare program sponsored by the Capital Region Planning Commission (CRPC), just might be the answer to your problems.

In mid-February, representatives from the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources, the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development, DEQ, Louisiana Clean Fuels, the Baton Rouge Clean Air Coalition (BRCAC) and others met to view a presentation about the benefits of the GreenRide (GeauxRide) program and to see how it would work for employees.

At a meeting facilitated by Mike McDaniel of BRCAC, CRPC presented a webinar and fielded questions and concerns about the program. Attendees discussed incentives such as a guaranteed ride home, flex hours and priority parking. The program would benefit the environment while saving commuters money on gas and car repairs.

"In an effort to look for new and innovative ways to reduce congestion in East Baton Rouge Parish, as well as the surrounding areas, the Capital Region Planning Commission has collaborated with Trip Spark Technologies to implement GeauxRide throughout the Capital area," said J.T. Sukits, CRPC Transportation Alternatives Coordinator. "GeauxRide is an online utility that allows employees at local businesses to arrange carpools to and from work amongst themselves."

"The Baton Rouge Clean Air Coalition welcomes the introduction of CRPC's GeauxRide rideshare program into the Baton Rouge area. GeauxRide is a local rebranding of the national GreenRide program that has been successfully





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implemented in major urban areas around the country (including New Orleans). It is a powerful and flexible internet-based rideshare tool with good privacy and security features," McDaniel said. "If we are going to try to mitigate our local problems of ozone nonattainment and traffic congestion, we need to look at innovative strategies to reduce the number of single-occupancy vehicles in our local daily commutes and to increase the use of multi-occupancy platforms such as ridesharing, public transit, park-and-ride services and van pools. Geaux Ride is an excellent tool to facilitate such a strategy."

Since there is such a concentration of workers in the downtown state complex, it makes sense to start the program through the state agencies. Then, the plan is to expand the program to industry and business.

Less road traffic will result in less congestion, calming rides to and from home and less fuel emissions polluting the air. The program is a win-win for employees and for the environment.

For more information, call CRPC at 225-383-5203 or contact J.T. Sukits at jtsukits@brgov.com.

DEQ's Ambient Water Quality Monitoring Program

Part 1 of 3: The Integrated Report and Water Assessment

ommencing a three-part series on DEQ's ambient water quality monitoring program, we begins with an overview of the program, the regulations and guidelines involved, and some spotlights DEQ's role in employing those measures in the field.

One of DEQ's core responsibilities is to protect the chemical, physical, biological and aesthetic integrity of the water resources and aquatic environment in Louisiana. Its prominent coastline on the Gulf of Mexico and more than 84,000 miles of rivers, lakes, wetlands, estuaries and other water bodies present a challenging task.

Such a challenge prompted DEQ to create the ambient water quality monitoring program. It is intended to ensure that every water body in Louisiana meets the state and federal water quality guidelines for recreational use, fish and wildlife propagation and other designated uses. Based on a four-year rotation of water bodies to be sampled, personnel in DEQ's regional offices establish a sampling schedule for their respective water bodies. Each location is sampled on a monthly basis for 12 months.

Under the Clean Water Act, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency requires each state to submit a report every two years that addresses



DEQ Environmental Scientist Davina Witte lowers a Hydrolab MS5 sonde into the Tchefuncte River for an insitu water analysis.





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that state's water quality. This includes a description and status of water quality and a description of the state's water pollution control activities. To meet that requirement, DEQ publishes a bi-annual Louisiana Water Quality Integrated Report which includes a summary of the state's water quality assessment program based on water analysis data collected by DEQ's Inspections Division.



DEQ Environmental Scientist Zach Herrington conducts a wading flow measurement at Big Creek in Tangipahoa Parish.

Section 305(b) of the Clean Water Act requires states to compile a report on all of their water bodies – known as a 305(b) report. A subset of that report is the 303(d) impaired waters list, which details the impaired (environmentally degraded or polluted) waters that still require a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL). A TMDL is a calculation of the maximum amount of a pollutant that a water body can receive while safely maintaining and meeting water quality standards. A TMDL must be developed and implemented in order to quantify the constituent levels and address the impairment in a water body.

From those TMDLs, DEQ has employed stricter water discharge permits and undertaken various scientific endeavors in order to inform the public on the importance of maintaining healthy water bodies. Public education and

community outreach efforts such as the Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Group and the Drinking Water Protection Program have been effective in turning impaired waters around. A comprehensive water quality management program and DEQ's close relationship with watershed coordinators throughout Louisiana have helped to reduce unauthorized wastewater discharges. These efforts tie into the agency's statewide regulatory enforcement capability and ongoing wastewater permitting and inspections functions.

DEQ's Nonpoint Source group has worked with several partners, such as the Louisiana Department of Agriculture, the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation, watershed coordinators and others to inform the public on best management practices (BMPs) that address nonpoint source pollution. In Louisiana, nonpoint source pollution is predominantly caused by agricultural and urban runoff, poorly maintained home sewage systems and construction sites -- all of which can negatively impact a water body. Runoff carries natural and man-made pollutants which are ultimately deposited into water bodies.

Bayou Plaquemine Brule in south Louisiana's Mermentau River basin is an example where the TMDL study and Nonpoint Source Program worked together to remove a fecal coliform problem. In 1998, DEQ added the bayou to the 303(d) list, and a watershed plan was completed in 2000. "Projects were launched to assist local landowners in the implementation of BMPs to reduce nonpoint source pollution and the U.S. Department of Agriculture implemented practices on more than 70,656 acres," said Chuck Berger, DEQ Water Quality Modeling/TMDL Technical Advisor. "We also developed a TMDL there in 2001 and provided funding to two local water conservation districts to implement BMPs. These included irrigation water management, drill planting of rice, rotational grazing and pasture fencing in nearby waterways."



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During this process, the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals assisted with the installation of more than 3,300 new aerobic treatment units, an alternative to septic systems that requires oxygen and natural processes, in residences. These combined efforts caused a dramatic decline in bacteria counts and the bayou was subsequently removed from the impaired waters list in 2008. Today, water sampling indicates that the bayou currently meets the standard for swimming -- also known as primary contact recreation.

Bayou Plaquemine Brule is just one of many success stories across the state. Its return to healthy condition is an example of how the ambient water quality program pools together a variety of resources and teams across the department and state to actively engage in reducing water pollution.

To view the 2014 Louisiana Water Quality Inventory: Integrated Report, please visit:

http://cms/portal/divisions/waterpermits/waterqualitystandardsassessment/waterqualityinventorysection305b/2014integratedreport.aspx

***In next month's e-newsletter, we will cover the new water testing equipment and the water sampling process.

DEQ's radiation permit writing and field inspections ensure equipment meets regulations

ver wonder about those X-ray machines in the dentist's office and how they are regulated? Well, one of the areas that DEQ's Office of Environmental Compliance oversees is radiation and radiological materials – and the environmental regulations and state licensing requirements that govern their usage.

DEQ monitors not only small town dental offices, but hospitals, clinics, courthouses, industrial facilities, road/asphalt laying firms and soil testing companies. It covers any place that uses a radiation emitting device such as an X-ray machine, soil moisture density portable gauge, X-ray flourescent gauge or industrial radiography exposure

Melanie Bauder, DEQ Environmental Scientist, reviews a radioactive material license application.

devices. There are more than 20 different types of licenses, and every location using such a device must be registered or licensed. While X-ray units are the most common, there are approximately 10,000 registered units in the state that have been identified for inspection.

As of February 2015, there are 502 active material licenses in Louisiana.

Karen Burgard and Melanie Bauder are environmental scientists and senior license writers tasked with reviewing and processing license and registration applications.

"Once a new application has been reviewed, our Inspection Division will conduct a pre-license inspection at the location to



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ensure that the facility name and location are accurate, and that safety measures and immediate alarm notifications are in place, if necessary," said Bauder.

A diagram of the facility, complete description of the radiological unit or device, safety protocols, training documentation and procedures for securing material during storage, use and transportation are required for the license application.

"We verify that industrial radiographers have the required 40-hour safety class and proper on-the-job training," Burgard said. "Licensees must take an official exam to certify that they meet the standards for operation of the device, and upon achieving a passing score, we will issue an industrial radiography state card to the licensee." Radioactive Material Licenses vary in length based on the applicable technical data, type of facility and scope of devices being used.

"Physical site inspections are important to verify that what is stated in the application accurately reflects what is being practiced," said Russell Clark, Senior Environmental Scientist in the Radiation Inspection Section of the Assessment Division.

An initial visit is made prior to issuance of the license, followed by announced and unannounced visits at more or less regular inspection intervals after the license has been issued. Inspections ensure that the location's records are complete, accurate and current and that the protocols comply with federal and state regulations.



Russell Clark conducts a device inventory and also performs radiation surveys of several Troxler 3440 soil moisture density gauges at a soil testing engineering firm in Baton Rouge.

"During our inspections, we meet with the site's radiation safety officer and review the applicable records. These include the organizational chart, radiation personnel monitoring records, training and certification records, receipt, transfer and disposal records, leak testing records, records of calibrations and surveys, and source and device inventories. We also observe whether the radioactive sources and devices are being properly stored and secured at the facility and during transport," said Clark.

Inspectors also verify compliance with U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) regulations and that the devices have the proper DOT and radioactive material labeling. If an inspection determines that a site's implementation of its radioactive material safety program fails to meet the standards, it will be flagged as a high priority case through the Enforcement Division. Enforcement will then review the issue and determine what level of enforcement action is warranted.

"Our overall focus is to ensure that the operational use of radioactive source-containing devices is in line with the radiation protection regulations and that operators are fully trained in their use," said Clark. "When there is a safety area of concern, while still on-site, inspectors reinforce the regulations and confirm that operators are up to speed on safety protocols."





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Service-learning project improves the environment

started the LaBranche Wetland Watchers service-learning project 18 years ago, working with community leader Milton Cambre, the University of New Orleans and the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation," said Barry Guillot, teacher and project coordinator at Harry Hurst Middle School. "The project is a way to utilize our beautiful Louisiana wetlands as an outdoor classroom where students can be fully immersed in science while learning about the many values of our wetlands and the many challenges that they face."

This is a nationally recognized service-learning program that enables students to meet required academic standards through activities and hands-on projects that benefit the environment. Since the inception of the program, students have spoken directly to more than 2,000,000 people across Louisiana about wetland issues through outreach opportunities. Harry Hurst is the first and only middle school in the state of Louisiana to be honored as a National Service-Learning Leader School.

"These kids are like teachers." Guillot said "Low pay, big heart, but they think they can change the world. They are not only learning, but they are helping out and making a difference."

The Wetland Watchers originally adopted a small tract of land. The project was to improve it for the field studies and to find a way to keep it from washing away. The first step was cleaning up all of the trash and appliances that people had dumped in the area. Guillot wanted to have a place to take the 150 students involved, but "word spread, and many other teachers and parents wanted their students involved as well." This small parcel of land has burgeoned into the Wetland Watchers Park. It is included in 28 acres of land donated to the project by the Pontchartrain Levee Board in 2004, including the 2.5 acres of land that was restored to the 1976 shoreline. This was a partnership with community leader Milton Cambre, local



Swamp School participants inspect a fish.

industry and the St. Charles Parish Government. The donated land is now the location of Wetland Watchers Park. Through grants and donations there are eight picnic pavilions, a huge grand pavilion, two outdoor classrooms, an 8-foot marsh overlook, and nearly 1,600 feet of boardwalk nature trails built by volunteers. During Hurricane Isaac, the park lost 30-foot portions of that nature trail.

"We were bracing against nature, not going with nature in the construction," Guillot said. "We learned from the damage."

Every 10 feet of the trail is built so it can break away with cable. Twelve hundred feet of the nature trail is now six feet wide and two feet off the ground to allow the water to pass underneath. Recently Entergy gave \$50,000 for an educational materials center. It is 16 feet by 16 feet, 17 feet above sea level and 12 feet off the ground. It has retractable stairs that will allow all material there to be safe and available after a hurricane. There are solar panels on the new building so there will be power when utilities go out. Hurricane Isaac buried the materials container under two feet of mud.



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What started out as a small idea became a whole school project and quickly started including other schools throughout the district. As the program included more and more students, the community became excited about what was happening. Different agencies, organizations, businesses, and colleges enthusiastically offered their expertise, time and resources. The Wetland Watcher Program currently has partnerships with over 35 different organizations. Student activities include planting trees, water quality testing, picking up trash and working on what is the first public nature trail in the area. Students use the knowledge they gain from working with experts to lead wetland trips and mentor younger students. Harry Hurst students currently work with students from 18 other schools and facilitate field experiences and science night presentations. Hurst students have led over 25,000 students on wetland trips since the program started.

Last summer was the first regional Swamp School at Wetland Watchers Park. The school is a summer camp that features canoeing, archery, crabbing and fishing. Last year it helped teach environmental outdoor skills to over fifty-eight 6- through 13-year-old participants. Students came from the entire region including participants from everywhere from Pontchatoula to Houma. Students in ninth through twelfth grades volunteer hours. There are four paid senior counselors and 10 to 12 kids. Last summer, the camp lasted for three weeks. The campers receive a "I survived Swamp School" certificate. The Swamp School program will expand this summer to include 125 students from across the region.

The Wetland Watchers have hosted groups from the National Science Teachers Association, international environmental groups from Canada, Europe, the Middle East, South America, the Netherlands, and Nigeria, and school groups from as far away as New York and California.

Last year, the Wetland Watchers sponsored a Haunted History Hike with students and flashlights as guides. At different stops on the hike in the nature park, hikers learned linear history about nature, pirates (in costume), LaBranche and French explorers. The hike was a senior project of Destrehan High School.

"The hike is weather dependent," said Guillot. "There were 800 people at the first one, so it looks like we may do it again"

Students are actively involved with fundraising for the program. Another senior project is the yearly "A Wetlands Reveillion." A reveillion is derived from the French word reveal, meaning "waking." It is a long dinner party or a party held on the evening preceding Christmas and New Years Day. All proceeds from the party benefit the public nature trail and outdoor classrooms of the LaBranche Wetland Watchers Park, located near Norco at Bonnet Carre Spillway. Last year the Reveillion raised \$15,000.



A young Wetland Watcher marvels at a small turtle.

Over the last 18 years, the program has provided more than 145,000 hours of volunteer service to the wetlands, planted more than 7,500 trees, conducted water tests in all parameters, collected more than 4,800 bags of trash and junk, and involved over 40,000 fourth, fifth, sixth, and eighth grade students in wetland awareness programs. The program has garnered awards and recognition too numerous to mention. For more information on the Wetland Watchers, go to www. wetlandwatchers.org.



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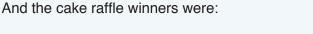
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Bake Sale for the Heart Association huge success!

aving a bake sale to promote heart health is almost an oxymoron, but it was a huge success, earning \$581.39 for the cause.

Under the supervision of Emily Barlett, DEQ Communications, and Marissa Jimenez, DEQ Small Business, the bake sale and cake raffle were the highlight of the day. There were cookies, brownies, cakes, cupcakes, muffins and even grapefruit for the more health-conscious.

The cake raffle sported a wide variety of choices and employees bought chances on the cakes they hoped to win.



- Strawberry and Blueberry Trifle Karen Jones
- White Layer Cake Mike Daniels
- Red Velvet Cake with Cream Cheese filling and Buttercream Frosting Lisa Kemp
- Lemon Supreme Pound Cake Jim Pate
- Red Velvet Bundt Cake from Nothing Bundt Cake Marissa Jimenez (who also donated that cake)
- · Boston Cream Pie Kate Herke
- Gold Chocolate Cake Lacey Vitteri
- 7 Flavor Pound Cake Terry Thomas
- Chocolate Cake Cheesecake with Strawberry Preserve Filling Tom Boulton
- Strawberry Cake from Ambrosia Bakery Trenderlyn Chatman this cake earned the most money at \$85
- Sweet Potato Pie Ed Ballow

The cake raffle earned \$261 and the bake sale was just in time for Valentines Day and Mardi Gras.

Ronnie Clark, General Services, retires after 21 years at DEQ

onnie Clark, Administrative Program Manager for General Services, in the Office of Management and Finance, retired this month. On Jan. 29, Ronnie and his wife, Paula, attended a retirement party at DEQ honoring his service to the department. Coworkers and former coworkers attended an afternoon gathering on the 10th floor to wish Ronnie well and send him on his way. He has no immediate plans.

The party featured snacks, drinks and cake, lots of cake. Most retirees have one cake for all to enjoy. Ronnie had four, courtesy of his coworker in General Services, Tom Payne. Payne ordered the cake and paid for it way in



Marissa Jimenez, Trenderlyn Chatman and Keiley Well sell treats at the DEQ Bake Sale.



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advance and went to pick it up the morning of the party. When he got there, Payne faced everyone's worst nightmare when they order a party cake. It wasn't made, and they couldn't find another one. Apparently, the order taker had filed the order in the already-picked-up cakes folder. Not to be deterred and undaunted, Tom recovered from the shock and instead of one cake – got four. There were two chocolate, one almond and one yellow cake on the table with "Happy Retirement Ronnie" written on three and a happy face on the last one. With so many cake choices, no doubt everyone enjoyed the feast.

Bon Voyage, Ronnie - thanks for your service and dedication. Best wishes from your DEQ family!!!



Ronnie and Paula Clark at Ronnie's retirement party

DEQ On The Move



Remember when you were little, and when you threw something out of the window of the car, your mom stopped-backed up and made you pick it up? That is the objective of the Louisiana Aquatic Litter Alliance, part of the Environmental Protection Agency's Trash Free Waters Program – individual responsibility for litter.

The group, which held its third meeting in the DEQ Conference Center was welcomed by DEQ Deputy Secretary, Alex Appeaning. With another meeting scheduled in mid-March, the group is close to completing an enforceable litter ordinance that can be used for all areas of the state and in other states.



Della Smith. DEQ Permit Support Systems, won the Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance (LOFSA) Valentines Basket. Proceeds go to the Heart Association.

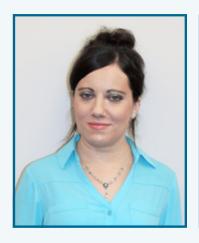




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Who's Who At DEQ?



Amanda DeBlanc - Office of the Secretary - Engineer Intern

DeBlanc is a native of Parks, LA (near Breaux Bridge). She recently joined the DEQ Business and Community Outreach and Incentives Division in the Office of the Secretary.

DeBlanc graduated from University of Louisiana in Lafayette with a Master of Science degree in experimental psychology and also received a Bachelor of Science degree in civil engineering. She is an Engineer Intern 1 at DEQ in the Louisiana Clean Water State Revolving Fund Loan Program.

Daniel Lambert - Office of Environmental Compliance - ER Supervisor

Lambert graduated from Louisiana State University in 1998 with a BS in environmental management. He started at DEQ as a student worker answering the hotline and after graduation joined DEQ in the emergency response section. Lambert was a supervisor in ER for five years, is the state on-scene coordinator for the BP Oil Spill. Lambert became a DEQ senior scientist and was recently appointed to ER supervisor.





Duane C. Wilson - Office of Environmental Compliance - Brownfields Coordinator

Wilson began his career with the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality in 1989 in the remediation section. He began working in the Brownfields Program in 2000 and helped develop the Voluntary Remediation Program regulations. He is currently the Brownfields Coordinator for DEQ. He oversees all aspects of the Brownfields Program, which includes managing the Targeted Brownfields Assessment Services contract as well as assisting customers redevelop properties by guiding them through the investigation and remediation process.

Wilson has a BS on soil science from LSU.

Louisiana Department Of Environmental Quality's Fourth Quarter Summaries

4th Quarter 2014 Enforcement Actions:

http://www.deg.louisiana.gov/portal/DIVISIONS/Enforcement/EnforcementActions.aspx

4th Quarter 2014 Settlement Agreements:

http://www.deg.louisiana.gov/portal/DIVISIONS/Enforcement/SettlementAgreements.aspx

4th Quarter 2014 Air Permits:

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

4th Quarter 2014 Water Permits:

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

4th Quarter 2014 Solid and Hazardous Waste Permits:

http://www.deq.louisiana.gov/portal/divisions/wastepermits.aspx