



DISCOVER DEQ

LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY NEWSLETTER



February 2016 Issue Number: 49

What's Inside?

DEQ Secretary Dr. Chuck Carr Brown has a message for Louisiana industry and business: Be proactive.

DEQ, Keep Louisiana Beautiful, host webinar on Litter Courts

Message from the Secretary

Monsanto receives Ready for Reuse determination

Which agency is responsible for safe drinking water? DEQ or DHH?

DEQ's General Services section manages mail, telecommunications and vehicle fleet

Annette Sharp appointed to USDA Agricultural Air Quality Task Force

DEQ On The Move

Who's Who At DEQ?

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DEQ Secretary Dr. Chuck Carr Brown has a message for Louisiana industry and business: Be proactive.

“We are going to ask everybody in the regulated community to take a proactive look at their processes,” DEQ Secretary Chuck Carr Brown told a meeting of the Baton Rouge Clean Air Coalition Feb. 3. Brown wants industries to make their operations more efficient and environmentally friendly. Brown has repeated that message in a series of speaking engagements since assuming the helm at DEQ Jan. 11.

Speaking at a meeting the Louisiana Chemical Association environmental committee on Feb. 4, Brown stressed the need for business and industry to confront their own environmental issues before DEQ has to address them. He said industry must be willing to comply with rules.



Dr. Chuck Carr Brown, center, speaks at the Louisiana Chemical Association environmental committee meeting Feb. 4.

“I don’t want your business plan to depend on less stringent regulations,” he said.

Among the items on Brown’s to-do list are revisiting DEQ’s fee structure for services the department provides, a fresh examination of financial assurance requirements to make sure the money in the funds is sufficient to properly monitor and close facilities, recreation of the former Office of Assessment within DEQ and right-sizing the DEQ work force by eventually expanding the number of employees at the agency. Brown acknowledged that budgetary constraints will impact the timing of some changes.

Any fee increases should be renewed on a regular basis and tied to the consumer price index, Brown said. That way, both the agency and its clients will be able to operate without any financial surprises.

Within DEQ, Brown said that the agency has resubmitted its ozone re-designation plan to EPA. “Region 6 Director Ron Curry said they will expedite its review,” he said. Brown has been chairing the Waste Tire Task Force, a group that has come to an agreement about raising the fee for processing waste tires. That fee increase must be approved by the Legislature, Brown said, but DEQ has to help tire processors too.

Continued on page 2



DISCOVER DEQ

LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY NEWSLETTER



February 2016 Issue Number: 49

“One thing I have challenged the agency to do is find new markets,” he said. Beneficial uses of tire chips and other waste tire products have to be found in order keep the program healthy, he said.

DEQ is preparing an implementation plan for the EPA’s Clean Power Plan, Brown told a meeting of oil and gas executives at the Louisiana Mid Continent Oil and Gas Association on Feb. 16. The EPA plan to reduce carbon emissions from power plants has drawn both political and legal attention, Brown said.

Louisiana joined 24 other states challenging the plan in court. The lawsuit challenges EPA’s authority to regulate carbon under the clean air act.

He likened the drama around EPA’s implementation of the plan to a “John Grisham novel.” First the plan is challenged in court, then the Supreme Court issues a stay of the plan (Feb. 11) and then Justice Antonin Scalia dies (Feb. 13), Brown said. Each of those things impacted the plan, he said, and it’s impossible to predict the outcome of the court review. On Feb. 16, EPA Assistant Administrator Janet McCabe said, “EPA is not expecting the states to submit anything by Sept. 6.” Attorneys General in two states, Texas and West Virginia, sent letters out Feb. 12, urging states that have joined the lawsuit challenging the Clean Power Plan to “put their pencils down.” Brown thinks it time “to sharpen our pencils.”

Brown said the right thing to do is move ahead with a submission to qualify for the two-year extension with the EPA if the court approves the plan. That plan has to include outreach meetings, and DEQ is moving ahead with scheduling at least one of those meetings in mid-March, he said. Brown made it clear that Louisiana is doing its implementation plan in parallel with the court activity.

“We are trying to stay ahead of it,” he said. “In the short-term, it’s everybody’s responsibility to help out the coal states,” he said. Louisiana and other states that are blessed with low-carbon energy sources like natural gas need to share with states like West Virginia and Pennsylvania who are coal dependent, he said.



Jeff Nolan, CID manager, talks to municipalities about Litter Court.

DEQ, Keep Louisiana Beautiful, host webinar on Litter Courts

Representatives from the Criminal Investigations Division from the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality hosted a webinar Thursday, Jan. 28, on how to start and operate a litter court within your municipality, city or parish.

The webinar, free and open to the public, was conducted with the support of the Louisiana Municipal Association. The 10 a.m. session provided an overview of the Louisiana Parish and Municipal Model Litter ordinances and handbook on litter courts, how they function and how to launch and manage them.

Mike Daniels, CID Attorney; and Jeff Nolan, CID Manager, presented the webinar, along with the Director of Keep Louisiana Beautiful, Susan Russell.

For more information on the Louisiana Municipal Association, please visit: www.LMA.org.



DISCOVER DEQ

LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY NEWSLETTER



February 2016 Issue Number: 49

Message from the Secretary

Chuck Carr Brown, Ph.D.

I am honored to become the 12th secretary of DEQ. I started Jan. 11, and there was no honeymoon. I have been busy. One of the first things I did was walk through headquarters, floor-by-floor, meeting as many DEQ employees as possible. I think it is important for you to know who I am. Even though I was an assistant secretary here from 2004 to 2008, I saw many, many new faces. It was a pleasure to meet so many of our employees, and I am planning visits to the regional offices soon to meet even more of the agency's staff.

I want information in this agency to flow both downward and upward. I want to hear your concerns and need your help meeting the many challenges we face. I want you to know my philosophy about this agency and how it operates. One way I plan to communicate with you is through this monthly column in the newsletter, the Secretary's Message. That won't be the only way I get my message out though – I have already begun an active speaking schedule at events around the state, and I have instructed the DEQ Communications staff to ramp up the agency's social media presence. We have a Facebook page, a Twitter account and soon we'll be posting videos to YouTube!

As I have addressed groups in Baton Rouge, New Orleans, Lake Charles and Shreveport, I have laid out my goals for business and DEQ:

- I want industry to be proactive, to look at how they do business and see if they can find better, more efficient and environmentally friendly ways to run their processes
- I am letting the regulated community know that they should not base their business plan success on less stringent regulatory oversight. However if they are not unwilling and unable to comply, we will help them comply.
- We plan to enforce all environmental regulations, fairly and equitably.
- We will revisit our fee structure and financial assurance requirements.
- In the near future, the Office of Environmental Assessment will be recreated.
- I will not tolerate illegal dumping. The agency's CID team will investigate and prosecute anyone who circumvents legal landfills.
- We will bridge the gap between surveillance and enforcement. Compliance orders, NOPPs, NODs and other actions will be expedited.
- A question: Who determines compliance? Answer, we do.

While visiting employees in the Galvez Building, what struck me was our diverse workforce. We have employees from many cultural and ethnic backgrounds. In this month devoted to Black History, I am proud of that diversity. Finally, I will continue to encourage all employees to strive for excellence. Your pride is in your work product.

Please join me in making DEQ the very best it can be to serve the citizens of Louisiana.



Gov. John Bel Edwards, second from left, DEQ Secretary Chuck Carr Brown, left, EPA Director Gina McCarthy and EPA Region VI Administrator Ron Curry met briefly in the governor's office Thursday, Feb. 25, to discuss issues of concern. The group touched on the status of EPA's Clean Power Plan, the Camp Minden cleanup, the St. Joseph water issue and air quality standards.



Enrique Wehlen, Monsanto Luling Plant manager (left), accepts the letter of determination, a certificate and a plaque, from Kristine Carter, DEQ senior scientist.



Monsanto Company Luling Plant produces agricultural and organic specialty chemicals that include organic herbicides, ammonia, bleaching compounds and pharmaceutical chemicals.

Monsanto receives Ready for Reuse determination

The DEQ Underground Storage Tank Remediation section and the Environmental Protection Agency Region 6 have determined that the Project Holly site at Monsanto Company's Luling site is Ready for Reuse.

The Project Holly site is approximately 6.5 acres in size, and is located at the east side of the north plant. It was used by Monsanto as a laydown yard, where equipment and large parts that can be kept outdoors were stored. After extensive groundwater and soil investigation, no further remediation was needed. The intended use for the property is industrial and Monsanto has leased it for the construction of an on-site formaldehyde plant, known as a guest plant.

In a ceremony at the Monsanto Plant in Luling, attended by plant employees involved in the project, DEQ Senior Environmental Scientist Kristine Carter presented a determination letter, a certificate and a plaque to Enrique Wehlen, Luling Plant Manager.

A Ready for Reuse designation is an acknowledgement by DEQ and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) that the environmental condition of the property is protective of human health and the environment and meets the requirements for it to return to commercial use.

Monsanto Luling encompasses 2,000 acres and has three guest plants on the site. Production, maintenance and waste treatment operations are conducted 24 hours a day, seven days a week. There are many areas that are being remediated, and the site even includes a Boy Scout nature trail and a fire training area for their "very well trained fire department with rescue capability," said Brad Phillips, senior environmental engineer and project manager of Monsanto.

Monsanto is environmentally conscious in many ways. "We are involved in beneficial reuse and the effort to not make waste," Phillips said. "If we have a waste, we recycle and reuse. Management is looking for a way to go carbon neutral and the sustainability program is more intense."



Which agency is responsible for safe drinking water? DEQ or DHH?

Which agency is responsible for ensuring for clean and safe drinking water? That is a common question posed to the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and to the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals (DHH). Technically, the answer is both. While DEQ and DHH's task to provide clean drinking water is the same, each agency has a separately defined function that supports that overall mission.

But for some, the "who does what" responsible agency can be murky. While in many states, drinking water regulation and oversight falls under one agency, in Louisiana, the mission is divided between DHH and DEQ (with the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources having responsibility over water well construction).

Simply put, DEQ's job is to promote protection of clean drinking water long before it reaches your kitchen tap. DEQ's area of oversight is on water that exists out in the environment – water you first see while you're outdoors and water under the ground (groundwater). This is called "source water" and includes aquifers (groundwater), streams, lakes and other waterways. Source water quality – before it reaches the lines to your faucet or showerhead – is DEQ's focus.

Once surface water enters an intake or groundwater enters a well and moves into a municipal, parish or city treatment system, it leaves DEQ's purview and enters DHH's area of responsibility. DHH's oversight begins as the water undergoes treatment and is introduced into the piping systems into commercial and residential lines. Your office or kitchen tap, bathroom faucet, showerhead or water hose are all considered "finished water," and DHH mandates the human health and safety of your water at that stage.

DHH is tasked with regulating the production, treatment and distribution of drinking water as it makes its way from the treatment plant or system to the end of your tap. DHH will also address water line issues such as breaches in the piping as well as installations and upgrades.

"DHH conducts routine sampling of all public water systems at various points along the distribution system as well as at the intakes or wells, so if their sample results suggest potential contamination in the source water (at the intake or well), they will notify DEQ to investigate the source," said Mary Gentry, geologist with DEQ's Aquifer Evaluation and Protection Unit.

Both DEQ and DHH work together to ensure clean drinking water, as both agencies play a role in the big picture.

It is important to understand that the environment plays a key role in the quality of our drinking water. That's why automotive oil entering a storm drain or pesticides applied on a field can ultimately result in negative impacts to our drinking water. Many people do not realize that any form of litter and chemicals introduced into the water or soil can potentially make their way into the water table, and ultimately can affect underground drinking water sources known as aquifers. Everyone must be a watchdog and should value our environment in order for us to benefit from protected, clean water sources.

The first element in tackling water pollution is a source water assessment to identify potential sources of contamination. To do that, the Aquifer Evaluation and Protection Unit travels across the state to update source water assessments by visiting the businesses and facilities that have been identified as potential sources of contamination from those assessments.

DEQ oversees:

Source Water (or "raw water"). This is either surface water from rivers, lakes or reservoirs or groundwater from aquifers accessed by water utilities via intakes (surface) or wells (groundwater) to treat for distribution as drinking water.

DHH oversees:

Drinking Water (or "finished water"). This is water that is treated by and conveyed from a public water system to residences and businesses.

Continued on page 6



DISCOVER DEQ

LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY NEWSLETTER



February 2016 Issue Number: 49

These assessments fall under the Safe Drinking Water Act of 1996 which is a federal mandate requiring every state to conduct a source water assessment for each public water system in the state.

The Aquifer Evaluation and Protection Unit not only identifies those potential sources, they educate and inform the public about ways they can recognize and reduce the potential for pollution. While the drinking water protection program is voluntary in Louisiana, DEQ promotes it through a comprehensive educational approach, where citizens and business owners are informed about proper drinking water protection methods. At community meetings, DEQ solicits volunteers to help promote and distribute information about the drinking water protection program across their parish.



DEQ Geologist Tiffani Barth retrieves GPS coordinates on a wastewater treatment station in a rural area in St. Martin Parish.

Their goal is to spread the word and engage the public in understanding the process and embolden citizens -- not just stakeholders -- in a call to action. "We provide brochures with contact information, a window decal identifying the entity as a 'drinking water protection partner' and public education," Gentry said.

"These visits are educational and a way to inform the owner operators that they are near a public drinking water well or intake and to encourage best management practices," Gentry said. "They are given educational materials during the visit. We will also look for and gather GPS data on any new businesses that are not included in the assessments."

In accordance with the outreach effort, the group sets goals with area residents based on their specific needs in regard to drinking water protection in their community. Data gained from field work is continually updated so that water systems can operate under that current information.

Supporting the overall effort is the source water assessment report, which is prepared by the Aquifer group by collecting and inputting an extensive amount of field data. "We gather the GPS locations of the wells and identify potential sources of contamination within a one mile radius of the wells – this comprises the drinking water protection area," said Tiffani Barth, geologist with DEQ's Aquifer Evaluation and Protection Unit.

In addition, DEQ staff works with water systems to write contingency plans in case of an emergency or loss of water supply. The staff also works with local governments to encourage the adoption of a groundwater protection ordinance to protect public water supply wells within their jurisdiction. To date, 97 local governments have adopted this ordinance.

And the Aquifer Group's work has gained some recognition. In a recent email, Larry Wright, past Branch Chief of EPA Region 6's Water Quality Protection Division, noted that "LDEQ's Source Water Assessment and Drinking Water Protection Program is a regionally and nationally recognized program that stands in the top 2 to 5 in the nation."

As of February 2016, there are approximately 1,300 to 1,400 water systems in Louisiana. Many are merging with others, and the number is in continual flux. While the work continues, DEQ hopes that the word will spread across all 64 parishes about the benefits and importance of protecting our sources of drinking water.

The Aquifer Group's role is just one component of DEQ's safe drinking water mission, as DEQ's water permitting, enforcement and nonpoint source divisions support the overall endeavor to ensure safe drinking water across the state.

Continued on page 7



DISCOVER DEQ

LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY NEWSLETTER



February 2016 Issue Number: 49

For more information on how you can be a part of the solution, visit: <http://www.deq.louisiana.gov/portal/tabid/2953/Default.aspx>.

For information on DEQ's Aquifer Group and the Drinking Water Protection Program, visit: <http://www.deq.louisiana.gov/portal/DIVISIONS/BusinessandCommunityOutreach/AquiferEvaluationandProtection.aspx>.

DEQ's General Services section manages mail, telecommunications and vehicle fleet

DEQ's General Services section handles sending and receiving mail, the motor pool, staff needs for teleconferencing and telecommunications issues, and the customer service team handles incoming calls and questions.

This section is in charge of receiving, sorting and distributing all incoming mail and inter-office mail, along with the receipt of bulk material through the shipping and receiving bay on the first floor of the Galvez building – DEQ's headquarters in Baton Rouge.

Thomas Payne and Brady Beacom, DEQ veterans with more than 25 years and 19 years with the department, respectively, work in the shipping and receiving center. Payne serves as a vehicle dispatcher and shipping and receiving representative, while Beacom is in charge of daily mail sorting and distribution functions inside the Galvez building.

"In addition to regular mail and packages from UPS, FedEx and larger office supply shipments, we can receive up to 700 pieces of certified mail alone on a given day, depending on the fiscal time of year and other circumstances," Payne said. "More than 20,000 pieces of mail a month can come in," Beacom added.



Brady Beacom sorts through the department's incoming mail in the shipping and receiving bay.

The section also maintains and services a fleet of nine vehicles in DEQ's headquarters motor pool, with an additional 160 vehicles distributed to the regional offices statewide and to divisions at headquarters that are maintained by and assigned to individual employees or sections across the five regional offices and two substations as well as at headquarters.

But vehicles and mail are just one component of the section's responsibility.

The customer service section, a team that handles incoming phone calls and assistance with communications needs, also falls under General Services.

Evan Bordes, administrative program manager, oversees General Services and serves as the manager of DEQ's customer service section – where all incoming calls are answered and/or routed to the proper section. In that capacity, he manages a team of six college student workers who serve as customer service interns in the call center. The team answers general questions from callers and routes other calls to the appropriate departments within DEQ.

Continued on page 8



Incoming calls are the bulk of the team's responsibility and busy work, as the section received and responded to a total of 4,704 calls during the months of October, November and December 2015.

Many calls concern the department's EDMS, or Electronic Document Management System, a portal that leads users to documentation available for public record that pertains to a facility or event. The team helps callers navigate EDMS, and can assist them with the submission of public records requests.

General Services also issues laptops and electronic devices for DEQ personnel working remotely, and they can issue and set up teleconferencing and audio/visual gear for personnel, and where telecommunications activities and devices are requested. "We also handle phone and building/property issues such as department-issued cell phone usage pertaining to new phones, upgrades and canceling," Bordes said. "The section can validate parking and issue badges and keys as well as take reservations on conference rooms within the building."

DEQ's Customer Service Center can be reached at (225) 219-5337 or toll-free at 1-866-896-5337.

Annette Sharp appointed to USDA Agricultural Air Quality Task Force



Annette Sharp was first appointed to USDA's Agricultural Air Quality Task Force in 1998.

On Jan. 29, DEQ executive manager officer/training and safety program director Annette Sharp was named to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Agricultural Air Quality Task Force. She will serve a one-year stint in the current 2016-2018 term.

The task force is composed of 35 members from 20 states who represent agriculture, industry, academia, public health, government, non-governmental organizations and other agricultural and environmental areas. Louisiana's sole representative is Sharp, who was first appointed to the task force in 1998 and has been a continuing member ever since.

"The Agricultural Air Quality Task Force is another example of USDA's continued commitment to developing science-based solutions and conservation measures that not only reduce the agriculture industry's environmental impact, but in many ways enhance our natural resources through improved agricultural practices," USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack said in a press release. "Bringing together a variety of perspectives and scientific insights to this task force will help reach solutions to resolve air quality challenges."

The Agricultural Air Quality Task Force promotes USDA research efforts and identifies cost-effective ways the agriculture industry can improve air quality. The task force also works to better coordinate activities and resources among USDA agencies and federal partners such as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. "This is one of the best and most active task forces in the country," Sharp said. "I am honored to be able to continue to contribute to air quality management not only in Louisiana but in the country."

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) staff selects the appointees, which are vetted by the Executive Branch. Meeting two to three times a year, the task force advises the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture on air quality and its relationship

Continued on page 9



DISCOVER DEQ

LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY NEWSLETTER



February 2016 Issue Number: 49

to agriculture based on scientific findings. They also examine research on agricultural air quality, promote federal, state, local and tribal coordination in establishing agricultural air quality policies (to avoid duplication of efforts). They ensure that air quality conservation practices are based on solid research and are economically viable for agricultural producers.

The task force was formed in 1996 at the direction of Congress to address agricultural air quality issues. Chaired by Jason Weller, chief of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service, this is the ninth task force since 1997.

The first meeting of the 2016-2018 Agricultural Air Quality Task Force is scheduled for the spring.

For more information visit the Agricultural Air Quality Task Force website at: www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/air/taskforce/.



DEQ On The Move

One of the first visitors to Dr. Chuck Carr Brown's office after his appointment as LDEQ secretary was EPA Region VI Administrator Ron Curry.

DEQ shows teachers its environmental resources at the LEES

Linda Brown and Marissa Jimenez, DEQ environmental scientists, man the DEQ booth at the Louisiana Environmental Educational Symposium.

Exploring the Natural World was the theme of the Louisiana Environmental Education Symposium for 2016. The symposium was held at the Marriott Hotel in Baton Rouge and approximately 250 teachers signed up to attend.





Who's Who At DEQ?

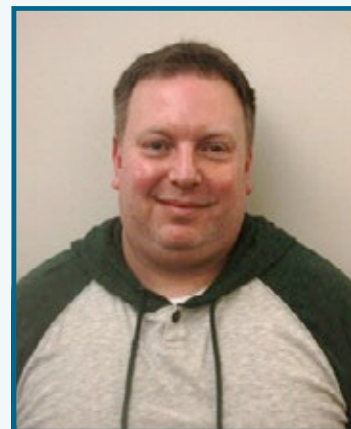


Karen Marchal – Geologist – Underground Storage Tank/Remediation Division

Marchal received her Master of Science degree in geology from the University of New Orleans in May 2014. Her thesis research, entitled “Geochemistry, Mineralogy, and Evolution of Micas and Feldspars from Mt. Mica Pegmatite, Maine USA,” was published in Canadian Mineralogist in June 2014. After graduation, Marchal worked for the University of New Orleans Pontchartrain Institute for Environmental Sciences as a Coastal Research Assistant before coming to DEQ where she is a Team Leader, Geologist 2 in the Remediation Division. Marchal is currently training in Baton Rouge and will be assigned to DEQ’s Southeast Regional Office (SERO) in a few months. Marchal says that “the environment and people here at DEQ have been extremely knowledgeable, accommodating and helpful to allow me the tools beneficial to achieve and abide by DEQ’s Mission Statement.”

Hal Bailey, Jr. – Environmental Scientist – Water Enforcement

Bailey is from Alexandria and graduated from Louisiana College in 1992 with a Bachelor of Science degree in biology. He previously worked at DEQ from 2002-2006 as an industrial wastewater permit writer in the Water Permits Division. He returned home to Louisiana this past December after spending nine years in Austin, Texas, working as an environmental permit specialist on the Stormwater Permits team at the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality. In his free time, he enjoys attending LSU sports events, spending time with family and friends and playing with his two dogs.



Lacey Gotreaux – Environmental Scientist – Water Quality Standards

In 2009, Gotreaux received a Bachelor of Science degree in toxicology from the University of Louisiana at Monroe. She also holds a Master of Science degree in environmental toxicology from Texas Southern University in Houston. Gotreaux received her M.S. in 2013. She started working at DEQ in November 2015. Prior to working at DEQ, she was a research assistant and laboratory technician at Texas Southern University. Gotreaux is from Eunice.



DISCOVER DEQ

LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY NEWSLETTER



February 2016 Issue Number: 49

Louisiana Department Of Environmental Quality's Fourth Quarter Summaries

Fourth Quarter 2015 Enforcement Actions:

<http://www.deq.louisiana.gov/portal/DIVISIONS/Enforcement/EnforcementActions.aspx>

Fourth Quarter 2015 Settlement Agreements:

<http://www.deq.louisiana.gov/portal/DIVISIONS/Enforcement/SettlementAgreements.aspx>

Fourth Quarter 2015 Air Permits:

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

Fourth Quarter 2015 Water Permits:

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

Fourth Quarter 2015 Solid and Hazardous Waste Permits:

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

