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LDEQ helps communities affected by August flood

When waters from the Comite and Amite rivers rose suddenly on Aug. 13 after several days of continuous rain, at least 101 LDEQ employees were directly affected, seeing flood damage in their residences. Three employees based at the Acadiana Regional Office were among those impacted by flooding from the Vermilion River and other water bodies in Acadiana.

As the Incident Command System was rapidly instituted at the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness, LDEQ's Emergency Response, Water Survey Section and Surveillance Division regional offices deployed personnel, boats, vehicles and resources to assist in the recovery and response effort. LDEQ staffed the Joint Information Center to assist with media inquiries as resources were staged and readied for deployment.

LDEQ's Capital Regional Office deployed six boats supported by three boats from the Acadiana Regional Office (based in Lafayette). Three additional boats at the Southeast Regional Office (SERO) in New Orleans were placed on standby ready to assist the National Guard. Dwight Bradshaw, environmental scientist staff at SERO, conducted two overflights of the Amite/Comite and the Vermilion/Mermentau basins for a search and rescue reconnaissance and to identify any potential or existing environmental hazards such as rack lines, oil sheens and chemical spills.



LDEQ environmental scientists Corey Schwartzburg (left) and Jimbo Earles (right) conduct search and rescue operations with help from East Baton Rouge Fire Department Capt. Kleinpeter (in yellow jacket) in Baton Rouge

Evacuations quickly took place on Sunday night, as many residents found themselves trapped in their homes or stuck out on the road as the water quickly rose. Search and rescue efforts were conducted to assist with the immediate needs of evacuees. Teams from LDEQ also accompanied Louisiana State Police Hazardous Materials units to conduct RNA – Rapid Needs Assessments – in order to assess facilities for signs of any damage or imminent threat to human health and the environment.

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“Our mission is to protect human health and the environment. When an emergency need arises, LDEQ is ready to respond. I’m proud of the prompt action agency responders took when the call came to assist in water rescues. We will continue to give our best effort as we move into the recovery phase,” LDEQ Secretary Chuck Carr Brown said.

“Our teams were deployed from Sunday through Tuesday conducting search and rescue efforts in Baton Rouge, Denham Springs, Central, Watson and Baker,” said Bryan Riché, Administrator of LDEQ’s Environmental Assessment Division. “Several residents were safely rescued, and we also participated in the evacuation of residents from Colonial Nursing Home in Baton Rouge.”

The Acadiana Regional Office (ARO) based in Lafayette deployed six employees to Baton Rouge on Sunday, Aug. 14. Based at the East Baton Rouge Emergency Operations Center, the group divided into three teams and conducted boat rescue operations in a neighborhood near Sherwood Forest Boulevard and Old Hammond Highway.

ARO staff also supported LDEQ headquarters personnel at the Incident Command on Tuesday, Aug. 16, and continues to conduct Incident Command response efforts as of Aug. 25. Staff from the Southeast Regional Office in New Orleans is assisting with debris oversight/landfill inspections and contacting calls to LDEQ permit holders in the affected areas.

Back at headquarters, Dr. Hassan Ghosn with LDEQ Air Permits Division, is marshaling volunteer cleanup teams to assist those employees in need, while the department’s Office of Management and Finance set up donation portals through PayPal and Eagle Federal Credit Union as well as voluntary donations and money received through a gift basket raffle, casual day fundraiser and a popcorn sales fundraiser.

LDEQ is also assisting employees with disaster assistance sign-ups through FEMA and stands ready to assist employees and their families as needs arise.

Disaster Assistance Links:

Register with FEMA: <http://disasterassistance.gov/>

Free Cleanup Assistance: <https://www.crisiscleanup.org/>

DSNAP Website: <http://www.dss.louisiana.gov/index.cfm?md=pagebuilder&tmp=home&nid=251&pnid=0&pid=360>

SBA Loan Website: <https://www.sba.gov/loans-grants/see-what-sba-offers/sba-loan-programs/disaster-loans>

- LDEQ’s PayPal account is established under helpdeq@la.gov for any voluntary donations. Donors are asked to choose the “Send money to friends and family” option, and all of the funds collected will be split equally among those in need.
- Voluntary donations will be accepted through August 26 and distributed equally to personally impacted employees wishing to participate.
- Cash or check donations can be made at Eagle Federal Credit Union (bank in parking garage across from Galvez building) to DEQ/Flood Donations Account 1500000024364 (routing number is 265473731) or using the Venmo app (<https://venmo.com/>) to user @HelpDEQ.
- For any questions, please contact Theresa Chatelain at theresa.chatelain@la.gov.



Message from the Secretary

Chuck Carr Brown, Ph.D.

Louisiana is a nation of heroes. That was never more evident than during the floods, unprecedented in intensity and extent, that struck south Louisiana beginning Aug. 12. Right away, LDEQ personnel sprang into action. Many people were rescued from their homes by heroes in boats. Some of those heroes were LDEQ personnel. Some of those boats were LDEQ boats.

Now the rescue stage has ended. It's time for cleanup. Everyone at DEQ can be a hero now, helping get the mountains of debris removed from curbs on streets in 20 parishes. It's an enormous undertaking, and you can be a hero by doing the best job you can and helping speed things back to normal.

I expect no less. We are a nation of heroes, and we are an agency of heroes. We will continue to demonstrate that every day. I will say more on this subject later, and I expect we will all be talking about this flood event the rest of our lives. For now, let's roll up our sleeves and get to work.

With a one-day swing through Shreveport and Monroe on July 27, I completed a tour of all of LDEQ's regional offices. I've been all across the state from New Orleans to Lake Charles to north Louisiana and stops in between (Capital Region, I'm talking about you). Everywhere I went I listened to the concerns of agency employees. I think I got to meet almost all the staff. It was taxing and tiring, exhilarating and inspiring.

We as an agency are a group of people dedicated to doing good work and serving the state of Louisiana. I'm proud to have such a professional work force under my guidance. I gave each group a short speech about the agency's goals and values. I want us to be an agency that goes above and beyond to provide the superior service our state deserves. That starts with our core values which include always being fair, basing all our decisions on science, conducting ourselves ethically and honestly and valuing diversity.

I want all LDEQ employees to do the best job they can, and I am telling everyone that if there is something or somebody that is impeding you from doing your job, I want to know. If you need something to get the job done, tell your supervisor. If you don't get any answer, tell your supervisor's manager. If you just can't get the feedback you need from them, you can go on up the chain of command to me. I want to know.

Supervisors need to know that if they can't solve an employee's problem, they should consult with their manager, and the manager needs to know they can consult with their assistant secretary or executive staff member. The employee needs to be kept informed and in the loop when a question is passed up the chain. We will answer employees' questions as quickly as we can and as definitively as we can.

Finally, I want to thank all of you at LDEQ for the many expressions of concern you offered after my house was flooded. I am fine. My wife and daughter had to be rescued by boat, but they are fine. I also wanted to tell you again how proud and grateful I am of the work you have all done. Be careful, be safe.



LDEQ secretary Dr. Chuck Carr Brown purchases popcorn to assist LDEQ employees impacted by the flood.



No-till grain drills to improve water quality

What are some innovative ways to prevent pollution from entering our streams and waters of the state? One solution is a grain drill. If you don't know what that is, it is a piece of farm equipment that helps prevent soils from eroding and sediment from getting into the water. Fields in southeast Louisiana have a large number of highly erodible soils. Traditional methods of seeding fields – disking or tilling – can cause excessive runoff which erodes soil, carrying nutrients and pesticides into the water. This creates turbidity impairments in those water bodies.

Through a partnership, and with funding provided by an LDEQ nonpoint source grant, three no-till grain drills were purchased and are housed at the Kentwood, Tri-Parish and Spring Creek Co-Ops. Farmers can rent this equipment to seed their fields and prevent more runoff into the rivers and streams.

In early August, an opening ceremony for the grain drill rental program was held at Bayou Vermilion District at Vermilionville in Lafayette. It was attended by Randolph Joseph, National Resource Conservation Service; Dr. David Cheramie, CEO of the Bayou Vermilion District (BVD); Danny Latolais, watershed coordinator; Emile Ancelet, director of water quality, Bayou Vermilion District; Crisalda Adams, manager of the LDEQ Nonpoint Source Pollution Prevention Group; Karen Vidrine, LDEQ senior scientist; and others. The grain drill will be housed there and available for farmers to rent.

“Getting this no-till drill is a great moment for BVD because it’s the realization of a goal that we set for ourselves at the beginning of the year,” Ancelet said. “We wanted to hit the three main impairments to the water quality of the Vermilion River, which are dissolved oxygen, fecal coliform and turbidity. The no-till drill will address the turbidity problem.”



Crisalda Adams (center left) and Karen Vidrine (center right) LDEQ environmental scientists inspect the new no-till drill that will be available for farmers to rent.



Crisalda Adams, manager of the LDEQ Nonpoint Source Pollution Prevention Group, explains LDEQ's part in the purchase of the no-till drills to a reporter from KATC TV in Lafayette.



Core values and questions for Dr. Chuck Carr Brown

Dr. Chuck Carr Brown, LDEQ secretary, appreciates questions and feedback. At the Louisiana Oil and Gas Annual Meeting in Lake Charles on Jan. 27, he was one of the guest speakers. When he was finished talking, he asked if there were any questions. Just one or two questions were asked.



Dr. Chuck Carr Brown, LDEQ secretary, speaks to the Lake Area Industry Alliance in Lake Charles about his goals and core values for LDEQ.

Then Charlie Melancon, secretary of the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, followed Brown at the podium.

“He talked about fishing and hunting wild hogs. When he finished, he was peppered with questions.” Brown was perplexed. Why had he not received more questions? He asked someone at the meeting who explained it using an elementary school metaphor.

“He told me that talking to Charlie was like going to recess. Talking to me was like being called to the principal’s office.”

Speaking to members of the Lake Area Industry Alliance Aug. 3, Brown laughed as he told the story again. He hoped, he said, to strike a more conciliatory tone but had serious things to say about LDEQ.

“I don’t want us to just follow the regulations. I want us to go above and beyond to provide that service,” Brown said. “I am reasonable and fair, but I am tough.”

At the meeting, he advised the industry representatives that compliance is profitable. “I firmly believe that if you protect human health and the environment, you will make money.” He challenged the group to look at their manufacturing processes and see what they can do better. No industry regulated by LDEQ should base their bottom line on less stringent oversight, Brown said. “We are always going to be fair,” he added, telling the group that is one of the agency’s core values. He outlined several other core values:

- “We are going to base decisions in science.
- “We are going to conduct ourselves ethically and honestly.
- “We will always value diversity.”

He is pushing the core values down the chain of command to everyone in the department, Brown said, mentioning his recently completed tour of LDEQ regional offices.

After touching briefly on some local issues, Brown told the group about the progress the agency has made on some air quality issues, including lobbying EPA to remove 11 of the 16 Louisiana parishes from the Reed Vapor Pressure requirement to use summer blend gasoline part of the year. “Next year, just five parishes will have to conform to the requirement,” he said.

“I think we are on the right track,” Brown said.

And when he finished speaking, there were plenty of questions.



Open burning of household garbage, solid waste is prohibited in Louisiana

While many people think that it's okay to pile household garbage on their property and set fire to it, they are wrong; it's not only illegal it creates a host of health and environmental problems. When household garbage is burned, it releases dangerous substances that can be harmful. The same is true of all solid waste.

"You can't open burn solid waste in Louisiana," LDEQ Secretary Dr. Chuck Carr Brown said. He reminded residents who have been impacted by the record floods in August that most debris is solid waste and only vegetative debris can be burned and only in areas that allow open burning.

Toxic air emissions, contamination of soil and groundwater and respiratory and eye problems have all been associated with open burning of household garbage. Improperly controlled open burning can also cause wildfires and destroyed property.

Many people, particularly in rural areas throughout the state, believe that it's OK to openly burn household garbage because their families have done so for generations. But the open burning of household garbage and other related wastes such as construction debris and other non-vegetative matter is illegal in Louisiana. As stated under Title 33, section 1109 of the Louisiana Administrative Code, "no person shall cause or allow the burning of waste or other combustible material on any property owned by him or under his control."

Regardless of what was done in the past, burning of household garbage is illegal and can result in hefty fines from LDEQ.

The ordinances prohibiting open burning of household waste are different than those that apply to the burning of ordinary yard waste such as leaves, branches, and dried grass clippings. Ordinances regarding the burning of these yard wastes vary based on where you live, so always check to make sure you follow the law and any local ordinances – which may be more strict than the state law.

If a LDEQ inspector notices or is made aware of a burn pile on a property, they will investigate to determine the nature of the burning activity and, if necessary, attempt to contact the property owner to offer advice on the regulations. Often a property owner is conducting open burning based on bad advice, "family tradition" or under inaccurate information regarding the regulations.



Open burning sites such as this one in Ouachita Parish cause harm to the environment.



LDEQ inspectors investigated this open burning site in the spring of 2015 where tar, paint cans and chemicals inside 5-gallon plastic buckets were being burned at a residence in Caddo Parish.

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All complaints received by LDEQ, including open burning complaints, are investigated. If an investigation finds that LDEQ regulations are knowingly being violated, the case can be turned over to LDEQ's Criminal Investigation Division. In some cases, substantial fines, probation and/or jail time can be imposed upon those found guilty of illegal burning. Local fire departments may also maintain a civil penalty ordinance for allowing the fire to spread or for failing to remain in the area to attend to the fire.

To report an illegal burning operation, contact LDEQ's hotline at: 1-888-763-5424, or submit a report online at: <http://www.deq.louisiana.gov/apps/forms/irf/forms/>

Quick tips for Open Burning in Louisiana:

- Burning household waste and tires is **ILLEGAL**, statewide – no exceptions.
- Burning yard waste (tree limbs and vegetation) is legal only in certain areas. Check the statutory exemptions for your parish, municipality or town for any specific restrictions or exceptions.
- A permit may be required based on where you live. For example, any outdoor burning in Lake Charles requires a permit from the Lake Charles Fire Prevention Bureau.
- Check for any area or parish-wide ban on open burning due to drought conditions or high winds.
- Many fire codes across the state require that any fire be controlled and monitored by someone during active burning. Always attend the fire with fire suppression equipment readily accessible.
- **NEVER** burn: plastic, synthetic materials, tires, rubber products, paints, household and agricultural chemicals, asphalt shingles, heavy oils, wire, newspaper, cardboard and other paper products.
- Consider your neighbors when making a decision to burn, even if allowed. Regulations do not foreclose other civil remedies should your fire cause damage or effect your neighbors' enjoyment of their property.



Dr. Chuck Carr Brown and the agency executive staff visit LDEQ regional offices in northern Louisiana

One of the initial goals set by Dr. Chuck Carr Brown was to talk to and meet all LDEQ employees both at headquarters and in the regional offices. He accomplished seeing and meeting the regional office employees in late July with a visit to the Shreveport Northeast Regional Office and the Monroe Northwest Regional Office.

Dr. Brown and the executive staff spoke to the employees and made it clear that LDEQ had an open door policy from the top down. Each explained his/her experience and vision for LDEQ and their offices and employees.

Dr. Brown addressed concerns of the employees, explained that the field employees are really the face of LDEQ to the public and the importance of that. Dr. Brown and the staff then answered employee questions.



L to R – Bijan Sharafkhani, confidential assistant to the secretary, Elliott Vega, assistant Secretary of the Office of Environmental Services, Dr. Chuck Carr Brown and Press Secretary Greg Langley, talk to the employees of the Northeast Regional Office in Shreveport.



Dr. Chuck Carr Brown, LDEQ Secretary, addresses employees of the Northeast Regional Office in Monroe.

New tablets to streamline field services at LDEQ

LDEQ employees are excited about some new equipment that LDEQ has acquired. New PC tablets have been purchased for the surveillance and remediation staff, and the equipment will streamline their day-to-day work routine. The XSlate 10 is a fully rugged tablet PC that is supplied by Pelican Computing, a Louisiana company.

When workers conduct inspections in the field, the new tablets will not only help them do their work better, it will improve efficiency. Since reports used to be handwritten, simply entering data on the XSlate 10 will improve legibility and make it easier for the office staff to read them, thereby making it easier for the reader to organize their notes.

“The department chose these specific tablets after test driving them and checking out the reviews,” said Jason Hanchey, business analytics specialist in the Office of Management and Finance. This tablet has all the features you’d expect from a

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Jason Hanchey holds one of the new, rugged tablets.

laptop/tablet combo, including Windows 10. It is readable in daylight and has a 10.1-inch display. This helps employees out in the field during sunny days. They (PCs) operate on both wired and wireless networks, include a touch screen and stylus, a rear camera and a full HD webcam with a microphone and speakers. The main feature is the 10-finger touch screen with glove and wet modes and an integrated GPS. The tablets also have all the standard connectivity and sharing features.”

Twenty-three tablets are being used by LDEQ employees at headquarters and the regional offices around the state. Two of the tablets are being used by the Radiological Emergency Planning and Response Group while the remainder are being used by the Remediation Group. The department is currently working on developing an application for the tablet that will automate site inspections for the Underground Storage Tank Division. The next step is to outfit regional office surveillance personnel with tablets with a docking station that could also serve as a regular workstation. In the next three to five years, one goal is to issue a tablet to employees that perform field work, with the idea of going totally paperless in order to improve processes and improve consistency.

“From the heart” – it’s what Camp Challenge is about

For 14 years, LDEQ volunteers have helped campers make crafts from recycled materials at Camp Challenge, the Lions Club camp in Leesville. In partnership with the Blood Center, LDEQ holds blood drives, and if a donor marks the “From the heart” box, the Blood Center donates money to help Camp Challenge provide services.

If you have ever wondered what happens when you donate blood at LDEQ Blood Drives, you actually help fund Camp Challenge when you check the “From the Heart” club option on your donation form. LDEQ donations generated a check for more than \$4,000 for 2016.

This year, a hearty band of volunteers, took the 4-hour ride to Camp Challenge. The camp is dedicated to giving a summer camp experience to children, ages 6-18, who have a form of cancer or chronic hematological disorders, such as sickle cell anemia. Siblings are included. There are medical personnel on-site to assist.



Volunteers from LDEQ and the Blood Center at Camp Challenge in Leesville.

Camp Challenge is open to all children who reside in Louisiana and is free for all campers. It offers camp activities such as swimming, canoeing, crafts and fellowship. Many of the volunteer counselors were campers themselves, and many others come back every year.

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Campers at Camp Challenge work on their crafts with help from volunteers.

The weeklong event is headed by the Rev. Father Tony Richard of New Orleans, affectionately known as “Snoop Dog” to the campers. This year was the 14th year that a group of volunteers from LDEQ, other agencies and the Blood Center traveled to Leesville to assist with the arts and crafts for the campers. LDEQ personnel organize the trip, pick an environmentally friendly craft, work, dance and eat with the campers. This year, the craft was the creation of necklaces with plastic tape rolls, scraps from road signs and many interesting add-ons such as beads, letters, ribbons and shapes. Many LDEQ volunteers return year after year to see the children and their progress. Each volunteer has a camp name such as “Little Tree,” “Secret Squirrel,” “Mis’ Behavin,” “Faolan,” “Ebay” and “Tinkle Bell.” Suzy Potter, whose camp name is “Ms. Keeto,” represents the Blood Center and organizes the event for the campers.

“The Blood Center must rely on volunteer blood donors and Camp Challenge must rely on volunteers for both counselors and camp directors,” Potter said. “It has been a privilege to interact, help

bring joy and assist kids battling blood disorders such as cancer, sickle cell anemia, lymphoma and aplastic anemia. Camp Challenge will always be, and has been, an endeavor fully funded by financial donations and volunteers. And, with your help, it will always be ‘free’ for the patient and their siblings”.

Camp Challenge is funded by donations from individuals and companies. It also receives money from various organizations that put on fundraisers for the sole purpose of funding the camp. Camp Challenge is a grassroots nonprofit organization. If you would like to donate to Camp Challenge and help these kids have a camp experience, go to the website at www.campchallenge.org.





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Vote for your favorite business card design!

Which design would you like as your new DEQ business card? Vote for your favorite! The winner will be used as the template for future business card reprints. Voting ends September 15, 2016 at 12 p.m.

Click this link to vote for your favorite: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/6PQ2BMR>

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Who's Who At DEQ?



Lily Giles – Environmental Scientist – LELAP – Permit Support Services – Office of Environmental Services

Originally from Independence, Giles received a Bachelor of Science degree in biology from Southeastern Louisiana University in 1996. After graduating from SLU, she worked several years with the Mississippi State Department of Health as a Public Health Environmentalist.

Giles then moved to central Pennsylvania's Amish country where she worked as a laboratory technician at an environmental testing laboratory. After nine years of long and cold winters, she returned home for warmer weather and to be closer to family and friends. She began working at DEQ in February 2016.

D'Lana Francois – Environmental Chemical Specialist 2 – Air Permits Division – Office of Environmental Services

Francois received her Bachelor of Science degree in mechanical engineering from Southern University and A&M College in 2009. Upon graduation, she worked as a project engineer for the NASA Michoud Assembly Facility for two years. After leaving Michoud, she worked as a Training Specialist with GP Strategies. During her free time, she enjoys spending time with family and friends, watching the Southern University Jags and Saints football teams, and doing arts and crafts.



Stacy Martinez – Environmental Scientist 2 – Waste Permits – Office of Environmental Services

Martinez is a native of Houston, but she was raised in Houma. She graduated from Nicholls State University with a Bachelor of Science in microbiology in 2010. She also received a Master of Science in marine and environmental biology in 2013. Before joining DEQ, she worked for Xavier University of Louisiana as a lab assistant.

Martinez enjoys spending time with her goddaughter, Willow, as well as attending music and food festivals in her leisure time.



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Louisiana Department Of Environmental Quality's Third Quarter Summaries

Third Quarter 2016 Enforcement Actions:

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

Third Quarter 2016 Settlement Agreements:

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

Third Quarter 2016 Air Permits:

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

Third Quarter 2016 Water Permits:

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

Third Quarter 2016 Solid and Hazardous Waste Permits:

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

