

# ANNOUNCING NOVEMBER'S SPOT AWARDS



*Joel Harris receiving his SPOT award*

## Joel Harris

(Nominated by Shannon Saunier)

I would like to nominate Joel Harris for the LDEQ Spot Award. He is an Environmental Scientist III in the Office of Environmental Assessment/Air Quality Assessment Division/Air Analysis Section. He is currently the only air analysis site operator based in LDEQ's Northwest Regional Office in Shreveport. His regular duties include responsibility for the operation of three ambient air monitoring stations in the Shreveport area, and one station in Monroe.

Joel's years of dedication to LDEQ has been extremely beneficial for the operation of air monitoring sites for the Air Analysis section to produce quality ambient air data while minimizing downtime. He has gained skills and knowledge on the site instrumentation where he is able to make

minor repairs on site. Because of this knowledge he has no trouble in learning the operation of new instrumentation. He also travels to CRO in the Baton Rouge area to update required EPA certifications on transfer standards against NIST primary standards.

In recent months, however, Joel has taken on significant extra duties. As part of a nationwide focus by the EPA this year on toxic air pollutants near schools, LDEQ was tasked by EPA with air monitoring on the grounds of the Eden Gardens Elementary School in Shreveport. Joel began the sampling for this special project on August 29 and it is scheduled to end after a December 27 sample.

Joel has so far performed these extra duties admirably, even though it has required him to frequently work on his normal days off (Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, and holidays.) He has also worked extra hours to make sure he has completed assigned site duties required each week. Joel has maintained a professional and positive work ethic during this time.

Mr. Harris' ongoing effort has met requirements listed in the DEQ Rewards and Recognition Policy. These include "making extra efforts to perform duties or special assignments in an exemplary manner", "making a high quality contribution to a difficult or important project or assignment", and "performing added or emergency assignments in addition to regular duties." For these reasons I nominate Joel Harris for a DEQ Employee Spot Award.



*Corey Gautreaux receiving his SPOT award*

## Corey Gautreaux

(Nominated by Lance Green)

I'd like to nominate Corey Gautreaux for a spot award due to his outstanding team work while demonstrating leadership and commitment to the Department. Corey is not only an outstanding permit writer (drafting over 100 actions this year), but he also goes above and beyond in his daily work by completing special tasks in a thorough and timely manner as well as training fellow employees. For example last month, we had procedural change in Air Permits to save on paper costs by printing double sided. Corey took it upon himself to edit all the TEMPO templates (which the entire Air Permits Division uses to generate permits, letters, etc) so that the documents would print double sided automatically. He then sent detailed instructions to the Air Permits Division explaining how the process worked and what to do if you had problems. He then helped several permit writers who still had problems. Corey also sent emails to his fellow permit writers with standard language for portable sources as well as oil and gas permits to increase consistency amongst the air permits. Just to polish off a great month, Corey trained a fellow visually impaired permit writer on

the new EDMS procedures. Corey's actions last month have shown leadership, initiative, and have benefited the Department and therefore I feel he is great candidate for a spot award.

## Dwayne Stepter

(Nominated by Judy Schuerman)

I am nominating Dwayne Stepter for a SPOT Award. Day in and day out, Dwayne can be counted on to do a good, solid job, regardless of the circumstances. He is very reliable and dependable. He supervises 12 radiation inspectors who are located in the regional offices statewide. He is in daily contact with many of these inspectors, advising them on routine issues, as well as handling any major problems that arise. He assures that the work is equitably distributed, and travels to regional offices for periodic face-to-face visits with staff. He arranges the quarterly Radiation Huddles, which are staff meetings where the Radiation Section can come together to share information and air concerns common to the group. Recently, after having made all the arrangements for our Radiation Huddle to be held at a state park outside Alexandria, Dwayne was informed that the particular meeting space had been double-booked (ours was arranged first, but that didn't seem to



*Dwayne Stepter receiving his SPOT award*

matter), and at the last minute we would have to look elsewhere for a meeting place. Dwayne never became the least bit flustered or upset, he just calmly made arrangements to hold the meeting in Pineville. Dwayne is our group's morale booster because he is always upbeat and has a positive attitude towards work, even in the face of adversity. He interacts well with all the staff members and upper level management. He is truly a pleasure to have in our section.

## Maureen Kennedy

(Nominated by Jeff Nolan and Mike Daniels)

As the result of an internal audit performed in the spring of 2008, the Criminal Investigation Division (CID) has undergone many changes. One of the recommendations of the audit was to physically insert an LDEQ CID employee into the EPA-CID office in order to create a partnership and allow for additional on-the-job training. Maureen Kennedy is the LDEQ CID employee who was chosen for this task.

Since partnering with EPA CID, Maureen has assisted on several complex federal criminal cases throughout the state Ms. Kennedy should be commended for these accomplishments in addition to her normal workload of investigating cases and making criminal referrals at the state level.

Mike Daniels, LDEQ CID attorney, and I hereby recommend that Maureen Kennedy receive a SPOT award for November 2009. From July 1, 2009 through September 30, 2009, Maureen referred three criminal cases to prosecutors. Two of the cases were complex federal cases that involved many months of investigation where LDEQ and EPA partnered together to make the referrals. The third case involved the illegal discharge of untreated waste from an apartment complex's sewerage system into a ditch. Maureen worked with a neighbor and the local sheriff's office to identify the company and individual responsible for the discharge.



*Maureen Kennedy receiving her SPOT award*

Maureen investigated a case in both Baton Rouge and New Orleans involving a demolition contractor. In the New Orleans portion of the case, Maureen filmed trucks owned and operated by the contractor dumping construction debris in a vacant lot on Almonaster Boulevard in New Orleans East. On November 17, 2009, the contractor pled guilty in New Orleans to illegal dumping. As a result, the contractor was ordered to pay \$29,000 in fines and clean up the dump sites in New Orleans.

In the Baton Rouge portion of the case, Maureen arrested the same contractor in April 2009 for submitting documents with false asbestos inspection reports for demolition work. On November 13, 2009, the contractor pled guilty to submitting the false documents to the Department. As a result, the contractor was ordered to pay \$11,000 in fines.

Thank you for considering Maureen for a SPOT Award as her exemplary performance has proven beneficial to the Department and strengthened bonds with our federal partners. She is an asset to LDEQ CID, EPA CID, and the state of Louisiana. Her work along the Almonaster Corridor will serve as a significant deterrent for illegal dumping in the state.



