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LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY NEWSLETTER

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Litter, litter everywhere – what to do about the problem?

Litter may be one of the most threatening and yet easily controllable assaults on Louisiana's environment and its economy. Each week, tons of litter are removed from our waterways and our streets. Plastic bags and bottles, cigarette butts, wrappers of all kinds and so much more, the litter can be overwhelming. It costs our local governments millions of dollars to clean up each year, and it hurts our economy directly through lost recreation and tourism opportunities. Despite a very strong state statute to regulate litter, local governments say they have few tools, limited enforcement capability and court systems which cannot manage the volume of cases. And the litter problem grows and grows.

Photo by Burg Ransom
An alligator bites down on a plastic bottle. Wildlife and humans alike are impacted by litter in Louisiana's waterways.

Since July of last year, DEQ has been partnering with the Environmental Protection Agency on the Trash Free Waters Program. Under the auspices of the program, DEQ convened stakeholders from around Louisiana.

To begin the process, DEQ and EPA invited representatives from local and state organizations to attend a meeting to discuss the problem of litter, to talk about what they are already doing and to discuss barriers and solutions. Participants from Keep Louisiana Beautiful, Bayou Vermilion District and Bayou Vermilion Preservation, Atchafalaya Basin Keepers, Bayou Manchac group, LSU, Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation, DEQ Watershed Coordinators and EPA met to share information and brainstorm solutions. Eventually, the group included members from all over the state, from Shreveport to St. Tammany Parish. This group, Louisiana Aquatic Litter Alliance, (LALA), was tasked with developing an enforceable template for a litter ordinance that could be adopted by each city, town and even parish governments. The process was guided by a neutral facilitator and successfully concluded in April 2015, ahead of schedule.

At that time, stakeholders' goal was to go further and develop a turnkey solution that every local government leader could use to develop a local law and implement it. The result, the "Louisiana Model Litter Ordinance Handbook," was completed in

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June and is ready for distribution and use. It is a comprehensive, "soup to nuts" handbook for anyone who wants to start a litter reduction program. It contains complete sections with the ordinance language, violation reporting procedures, prosecution and adjudication as well as appendices with sample documents of all kinds.

The handbook will be introduced at the 78th Annual Louisiana Municipal Association Convention at the CajunDome in Lafayette, July 30 to Aug. 1.The handbook will be available digitally there and thereafter by contacting Gwen Berthelot at DEQ, gwendolyn.berthelot@la.gov; Laura Johnson of EPA at Johnson.laura@epa.gov; or Adam Saslow (the facilitator) at adam_saslow@sra.com.

It's moving day for DEQ!

Moving anything is always a challenge. Moving a household, moving a business and even moving a room takes planning. But moving an entire floor, equipment and staff, inside the DEQ headquarters building to other floors in that building with an abbreviated timeline takes cooperation. The logistics are complicated. Much behind-the-scenes work goes on in a move like this, such as designating floors and office space, ensuring phonelines are installed and operational and that everything is move-in ready.

Carts were rolling on and off elevators as DEQ personnel relocated from floor to floor.

Recently, DEQ employees vacated the fourth floor of the Galvez Building so that the Office Technology Services, a division of the Division of Administration (DOA), could move in. Mark Meng of DOA is the Agency Relations Manager for the move. Terry Thomas, DEQ executive management officer 2, spearheaded the DEQ portion. She worked closely with Margaret Hansen who was project manager for DOA. Cooperation and planning were key to the successful move.

"Margaret Hansen, DOA project manager, worked very well with us," said Thomas. "She understood the urgency of our time frame (for the move) and helped us in any way she could, even postponing the start of her vacation to do so."

The goal of the move from the DEQ perspective was to group employees who are in the same divisions together on the same floors. Another goal was for DEQ to completely vacate the fourth floor by May 31. Staff was actually moved by May 29.
In case you are looking for former fourth floor staff, this might help: DEQ now has the part of the first floor, third, fifth, seventh, eighth, ninth and tenth floors of the Galvez Building. The Office of Environmental Services is located on floors three and five. The Office of Environmental Compliance is located on seven and part of eight. The Legal Division of the Office of the Secretary in on eight. Management and finance and the Capital Regional Office are on nine. The Office of the Secretary, which includes Community and Industrial Relations, Criminal Investigation Section and the Communications Section is on the 10th floor.

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NOLA Brewing Company supports environmental sustainability

New Orleans is known for good times and the libations that enhance them. But in New Orleans, there is a company that helps to provide that good time atmosphere while improving the environment.

NOLA Brewing President/CEO Kirk Coco stands in front of the company's reusable plastic kegs as he discusses the company's green business practices.

"NOLA Beer" — NOLA Brewing LLC (also known as the New Orleans Lager and Ale Brewing Company) — is led by President and CEO Kirk Coco. A New Orleans native, Coco was deployed with the Navy when Hurricane Katrina struck the city. After his discharge, he came home to help rebuild and develop local commerce and contribute to getting the city back on its feet.

Coco took over an abandoned warehouse at the corner of 7th and Tchoupitoulas streets in New Orleans' warehouse district. With the idea of building a microbrewery in the city, he put together a business plan and launched NOLA Brewing in 2008.

Coco wanted the business to embody eco-friendly practices that help to reduce waste, promote recycling and promote the reuse of materials. To that end, the brewery has used and reused a batch of between 4,000 and 5,000 plastic kegs from Plastic Kegs America.

"Through them, we have been able to reuse the same set of kegs, which has cut down on costs and reduced waste," said Coco. "Our aluminum can holders are also made of recycled plastic and are marine life friendly."

While the city of New Orleans doesn't have a glass recycling program, the brewery's use of aluminum and plastic supports that recycling strategy. "We have also begun to incorporate stainless steel kegs, which are reusable indefinitely and can easily last from twenty to thirty years," said Coco.

The company also contracts with Progressive Waste Solutions, which collects and processes all of the company's discarded aluminum and plastic.

The company saves energy in their brewing process as well. This is done through a gravity feeding process which reduces the need for electrical power. As grain feeds from a second story to ground level, the force of gravity is the facilitator. "We also promote climate control and the use of sunlight over electricity when we can, and hope to eventually move to solar water heating, as well as high efficiency and LED lighting," Coco said.

Currently, around 95 percent of NOLA Brewing's beer is transported locally in the greater New Orleans area, which produces lower vehicle emissions and a smaller carbon footprint.

Another facet of the company's environmentally conscious approach is their support of green practices and the use of fresh, locally grown ingredients. NOLA Brewing also donates all of their spent grain to a local cattle farm, which the cows particularly enjoy.

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NOLA Brewing lends its support to Gulf Coast restoration efforts through a fundraiser held by the brewery every year. The fundraiser is an Easter Keg Hunt, a scavenger hunt around the city that culminates in free beer and live music. The brewery sends 100 percent of the proceeds from the event to the Gulf Restoration Network's ongoing effort to protect and restore the Gulf of Mexico, and their efforts have not gone unnoticed.

On May 14, NOLA Brewing won a Green Nattie award for Sustainability Leadership in Manufacturing. In 2012 and 2014, they won a Green Nattie for the Most Sustainable Manufacturing Business in New Orleans. The Green Nattie's awards banquet haas been held each year since 2012 to recognize local businesses that have achieved the greatest success in the efforts to improve their environmental impact. It is co-sponsored by LifeCity LLC, the New Orleans Chamber Foundation and Natural Awakenings Magazine. In 2012 and 2014, NOLA Brewing won a Green Nattie for the Most Sustainable Manufacturing Business in New Orleans.

As proud environmental stewards, NOLA Brewing continually explores ways to make a difference. "We emphasize sustainability in our business practices, and we are always looking for ways in which we can reduce, reuse and recycle," said Coco. "It simply makes smart business sense to work under a sustainability model, and it's important to promote that idea to other businesses."

For more information, contact NOLA Brewing LLC, at (504) 301-0117, email Kirk at kirk@nolabrewing.com or drop by the brewery at 3001 Tchoupitoulas St. in New Orleans.

NOLA Brewing's 2015 "Green Nattie" award for Sustainability Excellence presented by LifeCity

UST Division ensures fuel storage tank compliance throughout the state

One of DEQ's jobs is to periodically inspect the Underground Storage Tanks (USTs) and fuel dispensers for every gas station in the state, large or small.

The goal of the UST program is to prevent releases of petroleum and hazardous substances from UST systems. The release of these regulated products into the environment threatens soil and groundwater resources and can cause explosive vapors to seep into confined spaces and occupied residences.

As part of the program's mission, compliance inspections are conducted every three years through both scheduled and unscheduled visits. The UST inspection team is a component of the Remediation Section, a unit within DEQ's Office of Environmental Compliance. This unit is tasked with checking tanks for general compliance issues to verify that they are in good working order and are being used in conformance with environmental laws. The team ensures that blighted and environmentally damaged tanks are

DEQ Environmental Scientist Laurence Carter observes the installation of three 20,000-gallon Underground Storage Tanks at a gas station in Baton Rouge

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cleaned up and returned to proper conditions for reuse.

Inspections are conducted during installations, upgrades, repairs, closures and for groundwater monitoring if remediation at a site is underway. A typical site visit, however, will begin with an examination of the location's storage tank prior inspection documentation and associated paperwork to ensure the owner is in compliance with the regulations.

Next, the inspector removes the gas dispenser unit's side panel to check for proper working of the internal components. Inspectors check for dryness inside the unit, noting any soil or water intrusion. They also check for proper operation of sump sensors and for suitable anchoring of shear valves. Shear valves serve as a fail-safe method that shuts off the dispenser's fuel lines in the event the fuel dispenser is damaged or breaks away.

Environmental Scientist Laurence Carter checks a gas station's fuel dispenser site for proper drainage and safety protocols.

At the fuel ports, the inspector opens the covers to verify that spill and overfill functions are in proper working order, fuel release detection sensors are operational and that spill buckets are in place and not damaged.

Some violations may result in delivery prohibition, at which point the inspector will affix a red plastic tag to the tank. The tank owner's business name and address are then provided to the DEQ Communications team, who send out a courtesy notice to all fuel distributors to inform them that the site cannot accept fuel until the tank is in compliance. When the tank is deemed compliant with the regulations, the red tag is removed and another notice is sent out to the fuel distributors to inform them that fuel may now be delivered to that location.

"In order to prevent contamination caused by leaking tanks, tank owners and operators must comply with state regulations regarding underground storage tanks," said Laurence Carter, environmental scientist in DEQ's UST and Remediation Division. "UST systems must be properly constructed and designed, and any installations, repairs or removals of equipment must be conducted and inspected by qualified individuals. In addition, active USTs must be properly operated and monitored for releases, and, if the unit is inoperable or fails to meet compliance standards, those tanks must be brought back into compliance or be properly closed and/or removed and the site will undergo an assessment for evidence of possible contamination."

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Spotlight: Jennifer Elee has been helping keep X-rays safe for 22 years

Next month Jennifer Elee, DEQ environmental scientist, will celebrate an anniversary: 22 years at DEQ. She has worked as an environmental scientist in Emergency and Radiological Services in the Assessment Division of the Office of Environmental Compliance for the duration of her career at DEQ. A native of Bastrop, Elee attended LSU where she graduated with a degree in environmental health.

Jennifer Elee examines a mammography machine at the digital imaging center at Riverpark Medical Center in Vidalia.

"I'm an Enviromental Scientist 3," Elee said during a visit to River View Medical Center in Vidalia. Elee works with X-ray and mammography equipment, anything medical that has X-ray or nuclear material as part of it. "We check to make sure the machine is calibrated. We do kind of a quick recheck – they have to be checked by a physicist once a year, we come every other year. We check some of the same things they check – the exposure to the patients, the exposure to the workers, the basic equipment calibration."

Her work for DEQ carries Elee to hospitals, doctors' offices, dental clinics or any place an X-ray machine is used. That includes some places where the machinery is used in industrial applications and no medical personnel are involved.

> "We check to make sure the machine is calibrated. We do kind of a quick recheck – they have to be checked by a physicist once a year, we come every other year."
>
> *Jennifer Elee, environmental scientist*

In 1994, Elee trained for the mammography program, and was soon certified to inspect mammography machines; working out of DEQ headquarters in Baton Rouge. Then in 1997, her husband took a job in Monroe. That worked out well for Elee because DEQ needed someone to do the mammography inspections in north Louisiana. "At the time, we were doing all the mammography inspections out of Baton Rouge. I took the north part of the state – Shreveport, Monroe and Alexandria," she said. Now, she does all the radiation work for Monroe.

With just one other radiation inspection technician in north Louisiana, Elee keeps busy dashing from place to place. "For mammographs, we do 50-60 visits every year," she said. There are also regular X-ray machine visits, about 20 a month. "I'm out, probably, three or four days a week doing inspections," she said. And Elee has two children to ferry around after work – a 14-year-old son and a 10-year-old daughter. She admits that "sometimes it gets crazy."

Then there is the paperwork. "For mammographies, we check their credentials," she said.

In the course of her career, Elee has gone above and beyond, joining the Conference of Radiation Control in 1995. The Frankfort, Ky.-based organization has membership representing every state. The nonprofit organization's mission is "to promote consistency in addressing and resolving radiation protection issues, to encourage high standards of quality in radiation protection programs, and to provide leadership in radiation safety and education." It allows members a voice in national issues

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relating to radiation, Elee said, and meets annually. Elee is an at-large member and serves as the organization's treasurer. In 2011, the Conference awarded the James W. Miller Award to Elee. The award is given annually to recognize CRCPD members "who have made significant contributions, individually or as a group, in assisting the states and/or the public in achieving a better understanding of, and protection from, radiation exposure."

Like every other field, radiation is advancing rapidly, especially the technology. "Radiation has changed tremendously. When they first started moving to digital, they said it'd take 10 years. It was more like five," Elee said. It's a demanding job that imposes a hectic schedule, but Elee plans to stick with it. "Radiation does a lot of inspection, but I like who I work with," she said.

DEQ responds to wastewater odor complaint in Ascension Parish

In the spring, DEQ responded to an inquiry from a resident who reported odors emanating from a drainage canal behind his residence in rural Ascension Parish. Responding to complaints or inquiries from the public is a large part of DEQ's mission in protecting human health and the environment. Often, the issue in question will involve a situation that will draw upon other agencies' expertise and jurisdiction.

DEQ Environmental Scientist Don Weinell (right) and DHH Sanitarian Stephen Weiter (left) meet with an Ascension Parish resident (middle) to determine the source of an odor from a canal behind the resident's property.

While DEQ's purview centers on ensuring the proper operation of wastewater treatment plants and their permitting, the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals (DHH) is tasked with overseeing sewage systems that are tied directly to individual residences and not connected to a municipal system. Part of that responsibility involves responding to complaints or questions that the public may have pertaining to sewage system operations, process malfunctions, odors, safety issues or technical issues.

DEQ and DHH conducted a series of visits, separately and jointly, to the location in order to ascertain the source or potential source of concern. In early April, DEQ Environmental Scientist Don Weinell teamed up with DHH Sanitarian Stephen Weiter on a joint visit to the resident's property as a follow up to their earlier individual site investigations.

A visit of this nature typically involves determining the exit point of the flow against the area's topography. If this cannot be definitively determined through topographical maps, field interviews and visual inspections, another option is to insert a red dye pack into the waterway in order to determine the flow's path. The dye will naturally travel down to an end point and, in essence, will provide investigators with a footprint of the flow from start to finish. This typically provides a better indication of the path and possible source of the odor.

"Initially, we look at the coloration, smell and general composition of the water in the canal," said Weinell. "Typically, gray or black water coloration will indicate the presence of solids or algae – which means that bacteria and/or anaerobic decomposition (or septic) conditions may be coming to bear in the effluent."

Often, the smell of the natural breakdown of organic materials such as dead foliage can mimic the smell of sewage, and a

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heavy rain will typically wash away the foliage, eliminating the offending odor.

An enforcement action can be imposed by DEQ if a specific destructive action carried out by a known responsible party can be identified – and if all attempts to remedy the situation short of enforcement have been exhausted.

While no specific source of the odor behind the Ascension Parish complainant's property could be located on at least two separate visits to the property, both agencies continued their investigation in order to gather more information on a possible source or sources.

About two weeks after the last visit, the resident contacted DEQ to thank the department for their investigative effort in attempting to determine the source. The resident informed DEQ that the ditch behind his residence no longer had an odor. It was determined that heavy rains in the area during that timeframe may have flushed out the ditch along with any offending odors.

DEQ staff noted the status and closed its investigation into the matter for the time being. Should the resident contact DEQ with a future complaint, a revisit to the site will likely take place with an additional investigation into the matter.

Louisiana Alternative Fuels gala and conference held in Baton Rouge

At the end of May, Louisiana Clean Fuels hosted a gala to celebrate their 15th Anniversary at the Baton Rouge River Center. The Clean Fuel Leaders Awards were presented and Republic Services of Baton Rouge was awarded the Fleet of the Year Award. Republic's Baton Rouge collection company, BFI Waste Services LLC, received the honor for its extensive Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) fleet expansion and petroleum reductions in 2014. The awards were presented by Louisiana Commissioner of Agriculture Mike Strain.

From left: DNR Assistant Director of Energy Paul Miller; Patty Nussbaum, DNR engineer 4; and Yasoob Zia, DEQ environmental scientist; stand in front of an electric car at the Louisiana Alternative Fuel Conference.

The next day, the statewide Louisiana Alternative Fuels Conference and Expo was held at the Capitol Park Welcome Center in downtown Baton Rouge. The event was hosted by Louisiana Clean Fuels, in collaboration with the Southeast Louisiana Clean Fuel Partnership. Sponsors included the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources, Republic Services, Solar Alternatives, CleanFuelUSA and AmeriGas.

The free event was open to anyone interested in learning more about reducing the use of petroleum by utilizing alternative fuels such as natural gas, propane, bio-fuel and electric vehicles. Lt. Governor Jay Dardenne spoke at the plenary session and guest speakers discussed their respective employer's support of alternative fuel technologies and processes. A breakout session and demonstrations followed.

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Who's Who At DEQ?

Brittany Heil - Environmental Program Analyst - OEC/Assessment/Emergency Response

Heil graduated from Northwestern State University with a Bachelor of Science in Public Safety Administration with a concentration in Emergency Management. She began working at DEQ in May 2015 as an Environmental Program Analyst in the Emergency Response section under the Single Point of Contact (SPOC).

Brady Beacom – General Services Clerk – General Services Division

Beacom was born and raised in Baton Rouge and has worked for DEQ for more than 18 years in General Services Division. He works in central receiving and shipping as a mail clerk. He is an avid LSU football, baseball and basketball fan, and especially enjoys tailgating, Tiger Stadium and the fan interaction. His interests include tracking hurricane paths, traveling and going on cruises. He has a brother, Jonathan, who lives in Madisonville.

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2nd Quarter 2015 Enforcement Actions:
http://www.deq.louisiana.gov/portal/DIVISIONS/Enforcement/EnforcementActions.aspx

2nd Quarter 2015 Settlement Agreements:
http://www.deq.louisiana.gov/portal/DIVISIONS/Enforcement/SettlementAgreements.aspx

2nd Quarter 2015 Air Permits:
http://www.deq.louisiana.gov/portal/tabid/2922/Default.aspx

2nd Quarter 2015 Water Permits:
http://www.deq.louisiana.gov/portal/tabid/2899/Default.aspx

2nd Quarter 2015 Solid and Hazardous Waste Permits:
http://www.deq.louisiana.gov/portal/divisions/wastepermits.aspx