

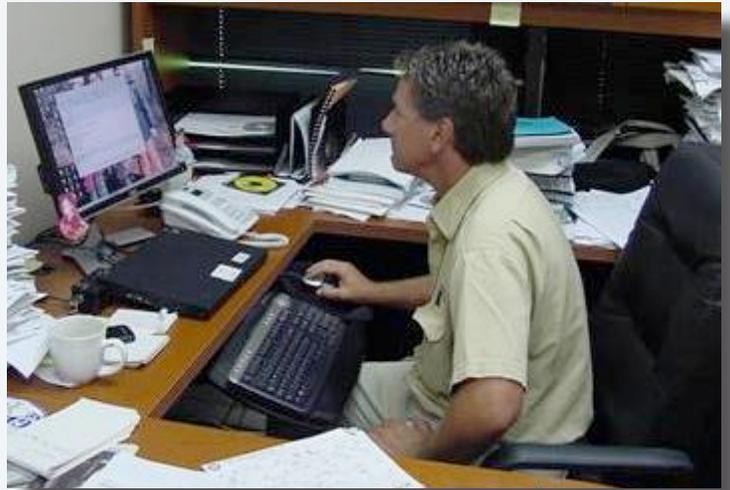
## DEQ PARTICIPATES IN LOUISIANA OFFSHORE OIL PORT DRILL

On July 19, 2011, representatives from a variety of state, local and federal agencies convened at the Civic Center in Larose, Louisiana, for an oil spill drill conducted by the Louisiana Offshore Oil Port (LOOP) based in nearby Port Fourchon. LOOP, LLC's mission entails the offloading of foreign crude oil from tankers, storing the oil and subsequently transporting it by way of connecting pipelines to refineries throughout the Gulf Coast and Midwestern United States. As part of their function, LOOP held the drill as a practice tool designed to bring resources together in response to a major spill-related environmental event.

Conducted on an annual or biennial basis, this year's scenario involved the sudden break of a connection hose that ran between the terminal and the M/T Vigilant Spirit, an oil offloading ship. In the scenario, the hose break occurred during adverse weather conditions, resulting in a release of more than 3,000 barrels of crude oil into the Gulf waters. As the drill progressed, mock environmental conditions were announced which dictated that the oil was rapidly moving toward the Louisiana shoreline.

Participants included representatives from DEQ as well as the U.S. Coast Guard, NOAA, the Louisiana Oil Spill Coordinator's Office, the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources, the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Lafourche Parish Harbor Patrol and other local law enforcement authorities as well as officials from private industry and local municipalities. Duties were divided up into various areas that would need to be activated in the event of a large oil spill or other major environmental event. The duties included a fiscal section that was stood up to address financial concerns and worker compensation; a public information office handled media response while working on conveying a central, unified message to the public; an operations section, which was tasked with managing the response while curtailing the growing environmental impact; a planning section tasked with ensuring that the response follows well crafted plans; a command section that oversees all aspects of the response; and a logistics section dedicated to securing all of the supplies and materials necessary to complete the response.

DEQ Environmental Scientist Jeff Dauzat, based out of DEQ's Southeast Regional Office in New Orleans, participated in the event as a representative for the department.



*DEQ Environmental Scientist Jeff Dauzat reviews status reports during the exercise*

"The purpose of the exercise is a training tool designed to ensure that all of the attending agencies and responsible parties can effectively address the scenario in a timely and comprehensive fashion," said Dauzat. "DEQ's role is to provide technical support and guidance to the Louisiana Oil Spill Coordinator's Office in their spill mitigation function."

In light of the oil leak from the BP Deepwater horizon platform in the Gulf of Mexico that occurred in April 2010, this drill was a particularly timely one, as the exercise served as a vital pre-planning mechanism where several agencies could come together, marshal resources and work toward possible solutions in the anticipation of a real event. The combined effort enabled the parties to successfully manage and control the flood of information while consciously noting any strengths and weaknesses in the overall process.

The participants worked together to assess the status reports in preparation for a combined response, with the goal of stopping the movement of oil while addressing the environmental concerns. Public relations officials and consultants from private firms served as an audience of mock media and concerned citizens which added another component of realism to the exercise.

Two media briefings were held throughout the day, followed by a late afternoon press conference and an after-action review which entailed a question and answer session that addressed successes, shortcomings and suggestions that could be implemented for upcoming drills.