DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

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New Mobile Air Monitoring Lab visits University of New Orleans

BATON ROUGE – The Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality is increasing its air-monitoring capabilities with a new, high-tech mobile laboratory. The Mobile Air Monitoring Laboratory has advanced air-monitoring equipment that will provide the department with instant data wherever the MAML is located. DEQ visited the University of New Orleans on Wednesday to show science classes and professors the new equipment and monitoring capabilities of the MAML.

DEQ Administrator Mike Algero said the new equipment will be a valuable asset to the state and should improve on the ambient air-monitoring system already in place.

"The department can use the advanced air-monitoring system for emergency response, for special projects to determine if there are air pollutants coming from a particular area and in response to concerns to communities throughout the state," he said. "Louisiana is one of the first states to have this state-of-the-art technology and the department is excited to have the capability to take air samples anywhere in the state."

The MAML cost approximately $400,000 and has been paid for using federal and state funds. The 2006 Winnebago was equipped with a gas chromatograph capable of sampling for hundreds of organic compounds. The mobile lab will also have capability of monitoring for the criteria air pollutants ozone, particulate matter, carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides, and sulfur dioxide. Because of the concerns about mercury in the environment, the mobile lab will also have a special mercury analyzer capable of detecting mercury in air at very low levels. The MAML can also monitor for hydrogen sulfide.

Throughout October, the department will take the MAML to the various regions throughout the state for training purposes and public viewing. The MAML is expected to be placed into full operation shortly thereafter and continue in service throughout the year.

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