



DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

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New Mobile Air Monitoring Lab visits fire department training center in West Monroe

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 Ouachita Parish Fire Department Training Facility on Wednesday to show emergency responders the new equipment and monitoring capabilities of the MAML.

DEQ Regional Manager Kirk Cormier said the new equipment will be a valuable asset to the state and should improve on the ambient air-monitoring system already in place.

“It’s exciting that the state has this state-of-the-art technology,” Cormier said. “Because it is a mobile lab, we will be able to monitor in areas that were previously accessible only with hand-held equipment. The instant readings we get from the MAML will be especially beneficial if there is ever an emergency situation where air monitoring is needed, such as a train derailment or chemical release.”

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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