DISCOVER DEQ
LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY NEWSLETTER

September 2014 Issue Number: 32

What's Inside?

Michael Vince, DEQ senior scientist named inaugural president of AAPCA

DEQ conducts waste tire inspections across the state

DEQ staff speak to environmental journalists about permitting and enforcement

Fort Polk moving toward zero waste to landfills by 2020

Volunteers conduct trash sweep of Ward Creek in Baton Rouge

Who's Who At DEQ?

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Michael Vince, DEQ senior scientist named inaugural president of AAPCA

Michael Vince, DEQ senior scientist, was named Inaugural President of the recently formed Association of Air Pollution Control Agencies (AAPCA.) The Association is a consensus driven organization focused on assisting air quality agencies and personnel with the implementation and technical issues associated with the Clean Air Act.

Vince, who has been with DEQ since its inception, has been involved with air quality issues for many years. He has been instrumental in bringing the state population centers together to take positive action through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Advance Program. This program allows areas currently in attainment to take proactive measures to remain in attainment of all national ambient air quality standards (NAAQS), particularly ozone and fine particulate matter (PM2.5.).

Michael Vince

"It was truly an honor to be named the inaugural president of the AAPCA organization. I am pleased with what we have been able to accomplish in our first full year of operation, and I believe that the organization is positioned to grow as news of its accomplishments spreads," Vince said.

Current members are Louisiana, Mississippi, Ohio, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Kentucky, Nevada, North Carolina, South Carolina, North Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, West Virginia and Wyoming.

Created in the fall of 2012, AAPCA formed a technical forum where ideas, information, and best practices could be shared when meeting the common goal of improving air quality and ensuring environmental protection. Members work to act as a conduit for, and provide feedback to, federal regulators on air quality rules that have significant impacts across the entire nation.

Continued on page 2

DISCOVER DEQ
LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY NEWSLETTER
September 2014 Issue Number: 32

One of the goals of AAPCA is a national training strategy targeting the needs of the air quality agencies and assistance calls to support the states with updates and representation.

Recently, the first executive director, Clint Woods, was chosen. Woods, who worked in Washington where he served as staff to the House Committee on Science, Space and Technology specializing in energy and environmental policy where he maintained responsibility on issues relating to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and NASA Earth Science. Woods received a Bachelor of Arts in History from the University of Mary Washington in Fredericksburg, Va., and his master's degree in International Commerce and Policy from George Mason University.

"Clint comes to AAPCA with the background and experience that we need in our first full-time director. His previous work experience, coupled with his energy and enthusiasm, are vital ingredients that will position AAPCA to accomplish its mission," said Vince."We are all excited to have him on board at what is a critical time for the states and air pollution control policy."

AAPCA held its first annual meeting this month and looks forward to growing and assisting states in air quality issues.

DEQ conducts waste tire inspections across the state

Whenever you purchase a tire in Louisiana, you will notice that a DEQ fee is added to your bill. The purpose of that fee is to preserve Louisiana's environment through the eradication of tire waste.

DEQ Waste Tire Inspector Terry Dedon reviews waste tire manifests for accuracy at a tire service station in Morganza.

All accumulated fees from tire sales are maintained in DEQ's Waste Tire Fund, which is used to reimburse tire processors for their effort in the proper collection, hauling, processing and disposal of waste tires. So when your purchase a tire, you are helping to preserve Louisiana's environment through the elimination of tire waste.

Under the state's solid waste regulations, waste tire generators have a duty to collect, count and report waste tires to DEQ on a monthly basis. Fees are non-taxable and are $1.25 for each retreaded or recapped tire, $2 for each passenger/light truck tire, $5 for each medium truck tire, and $10 for each off-road tire. Dealerships selling new cars are also required to collect a fee for each tire on a vehicle being sold. Fees must be collected whether or not the purchaser retains the waste tires; however, a collection fee is not required on spare tires, solid tires or tires weighing more than 500 pounds. At the point of sale, tire dealers must accept one waste tire for every tire sold from the purchaser, unless the purchaser elects to keep the waste tire.

Continued on page 3

DISCOVER DEQ
LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY NEWSLETTER
September 2014 Issue Number: 32

DEQ Waste Tire Inspector Terry Dedon checks a waste tire pile awaiting pickup in Pointe Coupee Parish.

Since tire burning or dumping is illegal, the collected fees ultimately play a direct role in supporting those regulations while protecting our environment. In fact, the program's incentives and enforcement actions related to illegal dumping have been very successful, as Louisiana has seen a drastic reduction in tire waste in the past few years. Since the program began in 1989, more than 7 million waste tires have been removed from Louisiana's environment, with the Waste Tire Fund recently cited by Sen. Bodi White as a highly effective program and a deterrent to waste.

Since its inception, the program has spread rapidly through word of mouth and its implementation has made substantial progress in preventing new waste tire piles from forming. Watchdog efforts have also helped, as citizen calls and online reports have been routed to DEQ's Criminal Investigation Division for immediate investigation. Since DEQ investigates all inquiries, those efforts have resulted in substantial fines and probation or jail time for those found guilty of illegal dumping.

Under the program, the collection and disposal process is addressed in tire disposal manifests that must be accurate. To that end, tire dealers must track all of their tire transactions in the manifest and submit the fees to DEQ once a month. When a regulated tire processor picks up and properly disposes of the dealer's waste tires, the processor annotates the manifest with the number of tires processed. Upon inspection by DEQ, the manifests are checked to ensure those numbers match.

DEQ's Inspection Division is tasked with visiting all tire generator locations in the state to ensure that legal obligations regarding fee collection, proper waste tire disposal and submission of reports are being practiced in accordance with the regulations. Inspections are conducted through both scheduled and unscheduled visits on a rotating basis. Currently, there are more than 2,200 businesses in Louisiana that are a part of the waste tire program, and each business must be inspected by DEQ at least once every five years.

"When we visit a tire dealer, we initiate a thorough review of their tire manifests going back three years," said DEQ Waste Tire Inspector Terry Dedon. "We specifically look to ensure that the tire fee being collected is not taxed, and that the tire count matches on all copies of a manifest to demonstrate that the reports are accurate. Also, we verify that the dealers have a sign visible to the public that states the regulations regarding the fee collection. If they do not have a sign, we will provide them with one for display."

DISCOVER DEQ
LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY NEWSLETTER

September 2014 Issue Number: 32

DEQ staff speak to environmental journalists about permitting and enforcement

Environmental journalists from around the country got an inside peek at how things work at DEQ when Senior Environmental Scientist Bryan Johnston and Enforcement Administrator Celena Cage spoke to a tour group Sept. 4. About 30 members of the Society of Environmental Journalists (SEJ) visited a couple of chemical plants outside New Orleans before breaking for a box lunch at Bonnet Carré Spillway Boat Launch and Pavilion in Norco. SEJ held its national convention in New Orleans this year, and the tour group was one of several that ventured outside the city to learn about environmental issues in the Bayou State.

For the tour members from more northern climes where early September is early fall, the robust Louisiana heat and humidity were a surprise. But all of them were game and exited their air-conditioned tour bus and fanned out on the concrete floor under the covered pavilion. As they munched on sandwiches, they listened to Johnston step them through the basic air permit process.

Senior Environmental Scientist Bryan Johnston speaks to a tour group from the Society of Environmental Journalists.

"Once the permit is technically complete," Johnston said, "the permit, depending on whether it is for a major source or minor source, can go out for public notice (not required with minor source permits)." Major source permits require a 30-day public comment period and a 45-day EPA review, Johnston said. "DEQ must respond to all comments in writing."

Once that process is concluded, the permit heads to the assistant secretary's desk for signature, which will make it valid. There are about 520 major sources in Louisiana, Johnston said. He outlined some of the factors that go into the granting of the permit and pointed out that if the permit is controversial and generates much comment, a basis for decision (BOD) will explicitly spell out the reasoning for granting or rejecting the permit.

Once a permit is issued, the permit holder must obey the restrictions set forth in the permit. If a routine inspection or incident response uncovers a violation of the permit's provisions, this violation may be reported to the Enforcement Divisions where Cage is administrator.

Cage explained the stepped response to a reported violation. First, the plant or individual is sent a warning letter outlining the violation and necessary corrective action, and if there is no response to that letter, DEQ may escalate its action to a compliance order, she said. In the instance of further noncompliance, an enforcement action such as notice of potential penalty may be issued, she said, and then a penalty will be issued.

The size of the penalty is related to such factors as how much the noncompliance may have benefited the violator, the violator's history of noncompliance and how quickly the violation was mitigated. The range of settlements must always recoup any benefit that is the result of noncompliance, Cage said.

Continued on page 5

DISCOVER DEQ
LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY NEWSLETTER
September 2014 Issue Number: 32

Enforcement Administrator Celena Cage answers questions from members of a tour group from the Society of Environmental Journalists.

In the case of a willful violation of permitted standards or of the state's basic environmental laws, enforcement can route the complaint to the agency's Criminal Investigative Division, Cage said, and criminal charges may follow.

Having fed their appetites, the journalists were ready to feed their curiosity and politely peppered the DEQ speakers with questions after each presentation. Johnston fielded questions about nonattainment, emissions inventories, coal dust and more. Cage was queried about penalty calculations, risk assessments and the amount DEQ collects in fines each year.

Johnston explained National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) in one of his answers, and elaborated on dispersion modeling and how it is used to show that a project doesn't compromise NAAQS. Cage was asked about the sincerity of companies and if they often have repeat violations. She said the companies exhibit a genuine concern for complying with environmental regulations.

At the end of the Q and A session, the journalists seemed happy to get back to the cool confines of their tour bus. The DEQ speakers had given them some insight into how permits and enforcement work in Louisiana, and the journalists had, in their questions, revealed some of their concerns about those processes.

Fort Polk moving toward zero waste to landfills by 2020

In April 2011, Katherine Hammack, the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Installations, Energy and Environment launched a sustainability initiative across the Army known as "Net Zero." Beginning as a pilot program, six Army installations were selected in each media area to launch the Net Zero initiative which sets a benchmark for the installations to annually consume only as much energy as they produce, conserve water and eliminate their solid waste stream to landfills by 2020. In January 2014, the Net Zero Installations Policy went into effect, directing all Army installations to move toward Net Zero goals.

One of the chosen pilot locations to achieve Net Zero Waste was the Joint Readiness Training Command (JRTC) and Fort Polk located in Vernon Parish. A significant civilian and military employer in the area, the post and the surrounding region serves a population of more than 82,000.

Fort Polk was already a few steps toward the idea, having implemented the Qualified Recycling Program (QRP) in 2009. Established by the Department of Defense, the integrated waste management program allows installations to retain revenue from the sale of recycled materials while diverting waste from landfills. To support the QRP's role and lead the Net Zero Waste Program, the post followed up with the opening of the JRTC and Fort Polk Recycling Center in November 2012. The QRP is a self sustaining program. Unlike many other Army programs, the QRP

Continued on page 6

DISCOVER DEQ
LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY NEWSLETTER
September 2014 Issue Number: 32

does not receive any appropriated funding. Operational cost to run the center to include a contracted labor work force and any needed equipment is funded by returned revenues from the sale of recyclables. The QRP and Net Zero Waste Programs have been successfully working together to reduce waste on the post through various educational and outreach endeavors.

A significant part of the waste reduction effort is facilitated by the 300 soldiers and civilian employees on the post who serve as designated Environmental Compliance Officers (ECOs) for their respective units. As liaisons between their unit and the recycling/waste reduction programs, their job is to ensure that the programs are being implemented in accordance with regulations. Supporting the ECOs are seven Environmental Customer Service Technicians (ECSTs), who oversee environmental compliance and ensure ECOs have the proper guidance and tools in which to perform their duties effectively.

Recyclable material can be separated easily through the use of co-collection recycling containers distributed throughout the post.

At the forefront of this effort is the Fort Polk Recycling Center. Managed by the QRP, the Center handles curbside collection of white and mixed paper on the post, as well as non-paper recyclables. Since implementation, the recycling program has been a major success. Cardboard diversion alone has amounted to approximately 200 to 300 tons of material per year being kept out of landfills, and recycling bins are located at practically every turn.

"When we began the Qualified Recycling Program in 2009, we saw a $30,000 sales return on our recycling for the year. Culminating over the last five years, our sales have grown to around $750,000," said Tim Fitzgerald, Environmental Protection Specialist and Installation Qualified Recycling Program Manager.

While educating newly arriving soldiers, families and visitors poses a continuous challenge, outreach efforts continue to spread the word. "Last year, we distributed 1,500 recycling bins to offices on Fort Polk for paper, plastic and aluminum collection. In addition, hazardous material collection containers are issued to each unit on post as part of our ongoing mission to be proactive in the process while educating everyone on how they can make a difference," said Tammy Veillon, Installation Sustainability Coordinator. "Segregation of different types of paper is of particular importance as total paper amounts to one third of the post's total waste stream."

In the Recycling Center's intake bay, cardboard, paper, bottles, used ink and toner cartridges are delivered, segregated, weighed and packaged on a daily basis. For paper collection, units can get credit through an incentive known as the "Riche$ from Recycling" program. Based on total weight of paper and cardboard that is turned in, a portion of the money allotted for the program by the QRP Committee will be given to the Mission Support Command through the unit fund program. The largest portion of the money then goes to the recycler with the largest weight of recycled paper. The program has been effective for fostering a friendly atmosphere of competition – all for the benefit of the environment. "We maintain tight control on the intake of recyclable materials and track everything on spreadsheets daily," Fitzgerald said.

Continued on page 7

DISCOVER DEQ
LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY NEWSLETTER
September 2014 Issue Number: 32

Tim Fitzgerald, Installation Recycling Program Manager, examines pallets of recycled paper awaiting pickup by a vendor.

Used motor oil and cooking oil are also collected, and anyone working or living on post can drop off used oil at the center.

With an abundance of ammunition a common sight at any Army installation, spent brass is another area that can add up to huge savings. To facilitate that effort, the center demilitarizes and sells all .50-caliber and smaller spent brass casings. The brass is sold to a scrap metal vendor, and revenues are returned to the program. Spent brass processing provides an annual revenue of approximately $250,000. The recycling center also processes many other types of metals including ferrous iron, aluminum and various forms of cast iron. In 2013, $110,000 in revenue was brought in from miscellaneous metal alone.

The recycling program also reaches out to the construction and demolition projects. This year, approximately 3,200 linear feet of waste piping from the demolition of two waste water treatment plants was recycled and diverted from landfill deposit. Approximately $50,000 in revenue was returned to the recycling program from this project alone.

Fort Polk has also looked toward additional methods in which to reduce. For example, gray water captured from troop showers in the field is processed in accordance with environmental regulations in a wastewater treatment lift station. Lead acid automotive batteries (non-Lithium) are also collected and stored in the warehouse for purchase and pickup by the highest bidding vendor for recycling. This helps to keep battery acid out of the waste stream while simultaneously putting money back into the program. The Net Zero Waste Team has established an Office Supply Re-Store where office binders, unused copy/printer paper and the thicker, more costly file folders are also stored and are free issue and available for use on official Army business and support programs provided by the Directorate of Family, Morale, Welfare and Recreation. In the past, many of those office items would simply be discarded and added to the waste stream.

QRP's endeavors have been very profitable as the program continues to operate on a self-sustaining model. Money brought in through the recycling and waste reduction effort is put directly into pollution prevention programs as well as morale, welfare and recreation programs for the military service members, their families and retirees in the surrounding community. For example, a recent Brantley Gilbert concert and FreedomFest Fourth of July fireworks show on the post were funded in part through the accumulated funds brought in from recycling. "Our program put approximately $85,000 into the morale, welfare and recreation programs for soldiers and their families last year. Without these recycling funds as a contributing factor, those special events would not have been able to take place," said Fitzgerald. The program also benefits the community off-post as many of these events are open to the general public. Through the revenue generated from recycling, the program has been able to purchase a $62,000 paper baler and a $120,000 grapple truck that can be used to pick up and process multiple commodities.

With the variety of recycling taking place across the post, glass still poses a challenge. While it is a viable recyclable that can be used for road or highway applications, an analysis conducted by QRP and Net Zero Waste on post

Continued on page 8

have shown that glass recycling has been cost-prohibitive function as collection, transportation and vendor interest continue to outweigh its benefits. Glass recycling, however, is still a target of focus as part of the total sustainability concept, where everything can be recycled and put back into use. “Promoting the benefits of glass recycling and fostering its demand are goals we are continually working to accomplish,” said Veillon.

Gray water collected in the field during training exercises is transported and processed at a wastewater treatment site at the Recycling Center.

HAZMART

In addition to the Recycling Center, a significant player in supporting these efforts is the Fort Polk HazMart, which their brochure touts as “a one-stop ‘no hassle’ facility for all your hazardous material and waste needs.” Opened in 1997, HazMart consists of a central supply warehouse with several storage units that are used for the cataloging, storage and issuance of free materials to units on the post. The HazMart serves as the post’s hazardous material oversight activity with a mission of reducing hazardous waste and improving workplace safety through environmental compliance.

According to Steve Martinez, Manager of the HazMart, the shop offers convenience in the hazardous waste reduction process. “Last year, we accumulated 11 tons of hazardous waste, compared to 184 tons 20 years ago,” said Martinez. “We offer products free to units and we can order, pickup, deliver, repurpose, repackage and track items such as antifreeze, lithium batteries, computer and phone batteries, paint, fluorescent light bulbs and solvents. For example, a unit may request some paint or antifreeze from us. We’ll sign out that material and track it. Any remaining material is returned to the HazMart for bar-coding, safe storage and subsequent redistribution to other units as needs arise. This cuts down on waste and implements a level of efficiency and organization in the total process.”

Used antifreeze and solvents are reprocessed for reuse, sent through a thorough distillation and filtration process, where any impurities can be extracted. In addition, the HazMart employs a specialized battery tester that has saved the Army approximately $450,000 a year through the retention of functional batteries that would normally be discarded as seemingly dead.

The facility serves as a convenient and safe way to keep hazardous waste down by using only what you need and delivering the unused material back for eventual redistribution. Overall, these functions have worked together to make a huge difference in the waste reduction mission. “In the last two years, the post has gone from 7,500 tons of combined waste to 5,000 tons, making this an overall reduction in waste by one-third,” said Veillon. HazMart’s common sense approach to waste reduction has played a large part in the shop’s success at Fort Polk, with more than $6.4 million saved through their effort over the last 17 years. Fort Polk’s forward-thinking hasn’t gone unnoticed either. In 2012, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency issued a letter to the Environmental Customer Service team commending Fort Polk for their success in hazardous waste reduction.

Continued on page 9

DISCOVER DEQ
LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY NEWSLETTER
September 2014 Issue Number: 32

A sign in the HazMart warehouse tallies the progress of HazMart's waste reduction effort at Fort Polk.

As the programs continue to forge ahead to meet the Net Zero Waste goal by 2020, the overall effort has been a positive one as newly arriving soldiers and their families are informed of the process and begin to chip in and do their part. Veillon stressed that it all comes down to personal responsibility, as people begin to realize the benefits of waste reduction and start to participate. She noted, "If you make the process easy for people to do the right thing, most will do the right thing."

And word has continued to spread. As of August 2014, at least 11 Army installations have implemented the Net Zero Waste Program.

With all of the ecologically conscious initiatives being put into place on the post, it's no surprise that Fort Polk has set the example for doing the right thing – through hands-on application on the importance of recycling, energy conservation and overall waste reduction. As Veillon points out, "the idea is to close the loop and promote environmental stewardship. Whatever we can do to reduce waste not only saves money, it protects the ecosystem and adds to the quality of life for all."

Volunteers conduct trash sweep of Ward Creek in Baton Rouge

Litter in our creeks, rivers, lakes and coastline is an overwhelming and ongoing problem for Louisiana. There are groups of dedicated volunteers and concerned citizens who try to keep up with the litter and clean it up. It is an endless job.

Recently, volunteers from LSU, PaddleBR and the Bayou Manchac Group conducted a trash sweep along the banks of Ward Creek near Siegen Lane in Baton Rouge. In four hours, 38 volunteers removed 1.8 tons of trash and litter from one-eighth of a mile along Ward Creek in the Annual Lake Pontchartrain Beach Sweep. Ward Creek is a feeder stream that flows into Bayou Manchac south of the City of Baton Rouge, so litter dumped into the waterway ends up there, eventually finding its way into Lake Maurepas.

Group picture of the 38 volunteers that helped clean up Ward Creek for the Trash Sweep.

"No worries if you missed it," said Jonathon Scott of the Bayou Manchac Group. "There are tons more where we left off, and the supply is replenished every time it rains."

Continued on page 10

Nathaniel Klumb sits in front of the trash collected in four hours during the Trash Sweep of Ward Creek.

The Bayou Manchac Group started as a group of homeowners along the bayou who wanted a clean, healthy bayou. In 2011, a tree fell across the bayou and 40 tons of litter collected behind it in just two months. Ascension Parish Department of Public Works removed the tree, and the Bayou Manchac Group organized their first cleanup event. Ascension subsequently brought in heavy equipment to remove the bulk of the garbage, which left slightly less than two tons to remove by hand. The garbage was staged on the Baton Rouge bank for pickup by the East Baton Rouge Parish Department of Public Works.

"The cleanup was a huge success," said Scott, "and we've since held many more in conjunction with PaddleBR in Bayou Manchac and its main feeders, Bayou Fountain and Ward Creek."

The video in this link gives an accounting of the event and the problem with Baton Rouge as the largest source of litter in the Lake Pontchartrain Basin: http://vimeo.com/28385713.

Events like this illustrate how severe the litter problem is, and the growing litter issue is one of the reasons DEQ is partnering with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to promote the Trash Free Waters Program. For more information on the Trash Free Waters program, go to: http://water.epa.gov/type/oceb/marinedebris/.

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DISCOVER DEQ
LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY NEWSLETTER
September 2014 Issue Number: 32

Who's Who At DEQ?

Tiffany Warner – Nonpoint Source Pollution Group – Office of the Secretary

Warner joined the DEQ Nonpoint Source Pollution Group in July of 2014. She has a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of New Orleans in environmental and coastal science and is pursuing a master's degree from Louisiana State University. Her primary interest at LSU is oceanography and coastal science with a minor in wetland policy and management.

Warner worked as a biogeochemistry research assistant at Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium (LUMCON)and she brings a voracious curiosity about all aspects of life that go unseen by the naked eye
.
"Life as we know it is only possible because of the tiniest aspects of life that go unseen and in many cases unknown and that fact makes what I do awesome. Communicating science is also a blast as you get to be Mother Nature's personal story teller and the stories 'she' comes with are always intriguing and rarely have a definitive ending," Warner said.

Crisalda Adams – Nonpoint Source Pollution Group – Office of the Secretary

Adams has just been promoted to environmental scientist supervisor with the Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Section. Her duties include educating the public on the importance of protecting surface water from polluted stormwater runoff. She works with Louisiana communities, industries and landowners in implementing Best Management Practices (BMPs) to reduce and/or prevent the amount of nonpoint sources of pollution getting into the state's waterbodies.

Adams graduated from Xavier University with a degree in chemistry in May 1991. Working in a Laboratory in private industry occupied her for approximately 17 years. She started her career in state government with the DHH (Office of Public Health) laboratory in the metals. After 4 years, she joined the DEQ laboratory in the metals section.

Will Steele – Office of Environmental Services – Financial Assurance

Steele has worked for DEQ for more than 10 years in the Hazardous Waste and Solid Waste programs. He has a Bachelor of Science in microbiology and a Bachelor of Arts in chemistry from Arizona State University. Steele has done graduate work and served as a teaching assistant at LSU.

Steele has taken part in training from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on financial assurance and cost estimation and has presented this financial assurance training at DEQ. He has also given presentations on Financial Assurance and Universal Waste at the Solid Waste Conference.

In his new position, Steele will assist permit writers with the review of financial assurance documents and will work to maintain financial assurance records in DEQ's environmental management tracking system (TEMPO) and in EPA's database.

DISCOVER DEQ
LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY NEWSLETTER

September 2014 Issue Number: 32

Louisiana Department Of Environmental Quality's Second Quarter Summaries

2nd Quarter 2014 Enforcement Actions:
http://www.deq.louisiana.gov/portal/DIVISIONS/Enforcement/EnforcementActions.aspx

2nd Quarter 2014 Settlement Agreements:
http://www.deq.louisiana.gov/portal/DIVISIONS/Enforcement/SettlementAgreements.aspx

2nd Quarter 2014 Air Permits:
http://www.deq.louisiana.gov/portal/tabid/2922/Default.aspx

2nd Quarter 2014 Water Permits:
http://www.deq.louisiana.gov/portal/tabid/2899/Default.aspx

2nd Quarter 2014 Solid and Hazardous Waste Permits:
http://www.deq.louisiana.gov/portal/divisions/wastepermits.aspx