



DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

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For Immediate Release

July 14, 2006

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DEQ uses specialized camera to hunt for leaks

BATON ROUGE – The Department of Environmental Quality will be using a helicopter throughout south Louisiana to conduct Hawk infrared camera flights on July 18-19.

The helicopter will be fitted with a specialized infrared gas imaging camera and will fly from Baton Rouge to New Orleans. Also, the camera will be used along the Intracoastal Waterway to Lake Charles and along the Calcasieu River area in an effort to find chemical leaks that are not detectable to the human eye. The primary mission is to look for emissions from tank barges and chemical storage tanks.

The specialized camera can detect volatile organic chemical releases from tanks, pipelines, barges and other operations. Leaks found by the specialized camera are not necessarily violations or unauthorized releases. However, there will be a ground crew working with the helicopter crew to visit facilities and barges that have significant leaks.

“The Hawk tests were successful last year and we have worked closely with the barge industry and area facilities to reduce unwanted emissions,” said Bruce Hammatt, DEQ administrator and technical advisor. “We’re pleased to expand the flights to cover more areas, especially along the Intracoastal Waterway.”

Leak Surveys is the company that developed the camera and it will supply the helicopter and the camera in the air. DEQ recently purchased its own infrared camera and will be using it on the ground. There will also be representatives from the barge industry and the U.S. Coast Guard to assist DEQ staff if there are any major leaks found on barges.

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