DISCOVER DEQ
LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY NEWSLETTER

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Gov. Jindal, DEQ Sec. Hatch attend dedication

Prompted by a reporter's question about federal hearings, Gov. Bobby Jindal had an answer to concerns about plant safety in Louisiana.

"Our DEQ works closely with its federal counterpart and with industry partners to keep not only our workers, but the community as safe as possible," Jindal said.

Jindal was guest speaker at the dedication of the Westlake Chemical Chlor-Alkali Plant. The event was held at Lamar-Dixon Expo Center in Gonzales Feb. 19. A host of elected officials, dignitaries, company officials and press were on hand for the luncheon event. DEQ Secretary Peggy Hatch and a small contingent of DEQ employees were on hand to hear the governor's remarks.

Jindal pointed to the $425,000,000 investment by Westlake as a sign of things to come. "The majority of new jobs that are coming into Louisiana are coming from companies that are already here," Jindal said. "Westlake is not new to Ascension Parish, not new to southwest Louisiana and not new to the state."

Westlake president Albert Chao said the company had been in Louisiana since 1986. "We started with $200 million in revenue a year. Now we're around $4 billion per annum." Half of the company's North American workforce is located in Louisiana, Chao said. The plant will produce polyvinyl choloride, a product Chao said will "enhance consumer's lives" in the form of PVC pipe and other items. "We are proud to be citizens of this community and the great state of Louisiana," Chao said.

Jindal noted that the project created jobs that will enable families to pay their bills. With more expansion in the state's chemical and other industrial sectors, Jindal said, the future looks bright.

"We're in the middle of an economic renaissance, but we're not done. We know the best is yet to come."

Gov. Jindal speaks to group at dedication.

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Ida Refinery and Dump getting cleaned up

Ida, in Caddo Parish, is in the northernmost part of Louisiana, just a stone's throw from Arkansas. The Environmental Protection Agency has partnered with DEQ to undertake a cleanup of the Ida Refinery and dump site with the goal of restoring it. DEQ environmental scientist Todd Thibodaux is overseeing the work, which began Feb. 18.

The site is a petroleum refinery that was constructed and operated by Grand National Oil Company from the 1940s to 1957. The Ida Oil and Gas Company acquired the facility in 1957 and operated the refinery until ceasing operations in 1966. Illegal dumping of industrial waste was documented after the Ida Oil and Gas Company ceased operations. The parent company, Ida Gasoline Company Inc., filed bankruptcy in 1966. The site covers approximately six acres with drainage into the Nance Branch of the Red River. First investigations of the site were conducted by DEQ in 1983. In 1998, DEQ approved the Source Removal Work Plan and sampling began. In 2012, DEQ asked EPA for assistance to address the hazards caused by the site contamination through their Emergency Removal Action.

Removal work in progress at the Ida Refinery cleanup in Ida.

After EPA conducted a preliminary site assessment, volatile organic compounds including benzene, ethylbenzene, naphthalene, arsenic and lead were found to be present in amounts above the EPA regional screening standard. A more thorough assessment was done and it was found that lead in the surface soil exceeded EPA Regional Management Levels.

EPA contractors discuss the work in progress at the Ida Refinery cleanup in Ida.

The resulting investigations led to the development of a Removal Action Plan. The plan is for EPA to remove and dispose of asbestos pipe wrap, waste source material and soil contaminated with lead. Asbestos abatement will be conducted first, then inoperable refinery structures, above ground storage tanks and associated piping will be removed. Source materials and contaminated soils down to a depth of two feet will be evacuated and disposed of properly. When that is complete, backfill and restoration of the site will begin.

EPA contractors are working on the site now and when the project is complete, DEQ plans to do another site assessment.

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Recycling Road Show in Ascension Parish

Recycle, Reduce and Reuse – bywords of the environmental community. Many municipalities and parishes sponsor Household Hazardous Material Collection Days but Ascension Parish goes beyond even that to help their residents recycle.

Several years ago, Ascension Parish instituted the Recycling Road Show the first Saturday of every month. The place is the Wal-Mart Store in Prairieville, and a recycling vehicle is in the parking lot from 9 a.m. until 1 p.m. for residents to bring recyclable materials for drop off.

The types of material being accepted at the Recycling Road Show in Prairieville include:

- Newspapers and magazines, including catalogs, phone books and paperback books, mail, colored paper and envelopes. Photos and carbon paper are not accepted.
- Milk and juice cartons, but no wax-coated frozen food packaging or take-out food containers.
- Cardboard, including detergent and cereal boxes, 12-pack drink cartons and flattened boxes.
- Aluminum, tin or bimetal cans and metal lids, but no aerosol cans or wire hangers.
- No. 1 through No. 7 plastic containers, but no bags, hangers, caps, lids, six-pack rings or chemical containers.

"Tommy Martinez, the Parish President wanted a means for residents to recycle instead of sending everything to the landfills," said Don Hysell, Ascension Parish Environmental Manager. "The Recycling Road Show was instituted and has been very successful. Some Saturdays we take in 3 to 4 tons of materials."

The Roadshow can always use volunteers to help take in the recyclables. To volunteer, call Don Hysell at (225) 450-1308 or just show up on the first Saturday of every month at the Wal-Mart parking lot in Prairieville.

Volunteers load up recyclables at the Ascension Parish Recycling Road Show

Volunteers load the truck with recyclables dropped off in Ascension Parish

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Police Jury

Belt-tightening at DEQ has reduced the agency's staff by more than 300 workers, DEQ Secretary Peggy Hatch told a group attending the Police Jury Association of Louisiana conference in Baton Rouge Feb. 28. "We're a small agency," Hatch said. "We've also gotten off the general fund."

DEQ Secretary Peggy Hatch speaks to the Police Jury Association.

"There comes challenges when you go off general funds," Hatch said. People are required to multi-task and staff has to rely more heavily on technology – many services are now provided online, she said.

Hatch pointed out that incidents such as toxic spills can now be reported to the agency via its website. The agency reaches out to serve the citizens with other online programs, as well, Hatch said. "We will continue to provide services to the citizens of the state and to industry."

Hatch praised the Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund, a program that provides low interest loans to Louisiana communities to upgrade their water treatment programs and improve the water quality in their area. The program is administered through DEQ and federally funded. DEQ personnel guide the applicants through the qualifying process. "It's a very small staff that works with those folks every day to make sure the money is spent appropriately," Hatch said.

Hatch said the agency is committed to prompt response to incidents through the Emergency Response team. "We have a lot of incidents," she said. "We work on oil spills like BP. We work on hurricanes – we are still working on Katrina," Hatch said. While the emergency response staff isn't a big staff, she said, they are located around the state and are always ready to respond to an event.

Hatch ticked off many other services DEQ provides including education, informational brochures and classes, outreach programs and much more. DEQ works with other agencies such as the EPA, she said, and sometimes receives funds from these sources. "Whenever we can get money from someone to help with environmental issues within the state, we're going to do that," Hatch said.

DEQ Assistant Secretary Sam Phillips also addressed the group. Phillips offered an update on proposed federal regulations that would affect coal-fired utility plants across the country.

"Greenhouse gas regulations will mean an end of coal-fired utility plants," Phillips warned. "That will push everything into natural gas."

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At first glance, that might not seem so bad for a gas-rich state like Louisiana, but even here it would have a harmful effect, Phillips said. “Thirty percent of electricity in Louisiana comes from coal,” he said. That’s because much of the electricity we use here is generated other places and imported into Louisiana, he pointed out.

If some of the proposed rules come through, “it will change the way we do business,” Phillips told the group. “This will be a watershed moment for the United States in terms of energy.”

Waste tires “done right”

At each of the two Airline Highway locations of Simple Simon Tires in Baton Rouge, a pile of neatly stacked waste tires is positioned out in front of the business. Each pile has a sign attached to it – “Tax Refund Sale.”

The tires and the sign are a sales tool to get customers to spend their tax refunds on tires. The fact that the tires are so carefully stacked and limited to a certain quantity is a sign that owner Bill Simon pays attention to waste tire regulations and makes sure he is in compliance with the rules. Simon got approval from DEQ before he began the 60-day promotion, and he agreed not only to limit the number of tires and stack them carefully but to also make sure none were illegally removed from the lot and none were illegally added to the lot.

Waste tires, handled correctly, are used for promotion at Simple Simon.

The former Oklahoma farm boy landed in Louisiana after a stint in the Army in the mid-‘60s. “I was flat broke. I couldn’t afford to go home,” Simon said. He already had a family, and he tried a few other things before finding his niche selling tires. “I peddled insurance, worked for Louisiana Creamery, drove a milk truck. I went into the tire business in 1966.”

Fifteen-hour work days and 7-day work weeks didn’t daunt the hardworking Simon. He did what it took, making his own television commercials and even dressing in drag for some of them. He believes in hard work and loyalty and one thing above all: “It don’t make any difference what you’re doing in life or what end of the spectrum you’re on, just do the right thing and everything else just falls in place.”

Doing the right thing means respecting the environment and following the rules. Simon is passionate about that.

“Right away I was involved in the Louisiana Independent Tire Dealers Association. Norman Rhea was executive director for the state of Louisiana. I was involved back in the very beginning of scrap tires, of scrap tire fees and trying to clean up some of the scrap tire piles that were around (all) over the state. Old Louisiana has been so good to this country boy that I can’t do enough to keep her beautiful, to respect her. I love Louisiana.” Rhea and Simon are both members of the trade group’s Hall of Fame, honored for playing “a significant role in the growth and development of the tires industry and Louisiana Independent Tire Dealers Association.” *Continued on page 6*

Simon's stores also offer automotive maintenance services, but he is aware that many people like to do their own maintenance and that's all right with him as long as they "do the right thing."

"If you want to change your own oil, I have no problem with that if that's your hobby. But don't pour the oil along the fenceline! Bring it to one of my stores. I will be glad to take it and dispose of it in a professional manner. Same way with your antifreeze -- if you want to buy your antifreeze at Wal-Mart, be sure to catch your old antifreeze. Bring it to me. I've got tanks out here for it, I will dispose of it. Same way with old tires -- if you've got any old tires around your house, don't just let them lie around or put them out for the garbage man. It'd be better if you brought them to one of my stores, and I will dispose of them professionally and in the manner in which we should do it."

"Bill Simon is a businessman who knows how to be successful while following the rules and regulations that protect our people and environment," said DEQ Undersecretary Vince Sagnibene. "He's a good example to others in the community who want to succeed while playing by the rules. DEQ is very serious about waste tires and hazardous wastes and will come down hard on violators who don't follow the rules."

He'll get no argument from Bill Simon.

"As far as following rules and regulations in business, it just ain't difficult. It just ain't difficult. Most all of the rules and regulations that have been put together were put there by people in business in our state. They weren't made that difficult that we all can't abide by them and just do the right thing," Simon said.

DEQ holds 2014 Environmental Leadership Program Awards

Every year, since 1995, DEQ has presented the Environmental Leadership Program awards to companies, federal entities, municipalities, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), schools or universities and communities who have gone above and beyond regulation to protect the environment.

This year, for the 2014 awards, DEQ Secretary Peggy Hatch was joined by Rep. Gordon Dove, chair of the House Natural Resources and Environment Committee, to recognize these environmental achievements. The ceremony was held at DEQ Headquarters in the Oliver Pollock Room in late February. New and existing members of ELP were commended for their voluntary pollution prevention efforts and community environmental outreach initiatives. The ceremony highlighted projects that went above and beyond regulatory compliance to substantially improve the quality of the environment.

ELP Awards were presented to large, medium and small businesses, municipalities, NGOs and schools/universities. This year, DEQ presented 14 awards and recognized a total of 17 new members that joined in 2013-2014 in recognition of the following:

- Pollution Prevention - 299,783,059 pounds (lbs) of pollutants were removed including: Criteria pollutants, toxic air pollutants, biosolids, GHG emissions, etc.
- Reduction in Water Usage - 4,080,000 gallons (gals) of water/day
- Recycling of Materials - 78,000 pounds/year of metals, and 1,995,757 gals/year of hydrocarbon contaminated water, soapy water, used oil, etc.

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Two special recognition awards were also presented to:

- City of West Monroe - Sparta Re-Use Facility
- Lafayette Consolidated Government-Lafayette Utilities System and Public Works Department - Rain Barrel Program

"Since the Environmental Leadership Program recognizes voluntary pollution reductions by government, schools, businesses and community groups, it highlights effort to improve the environment in Louisiana," DEQ Secretary Peggy Hatch said. "The winners have gone above and beyond regulation to combat pollution, spearhead community outreach efforts or present educational programs that make a positive difference in the quality of Louisiana's environment."

Any company, federal entity, municipality, NGO, school or university committed to improving the quality of the state's environment is eligible to join the program. For more information on the ELP, please contact Linda Hardy at (225) 219-3954 or visit the DEQ website at www.deq.louisiana.gov/elp .

Rep. Gordon Dove and DEQ Secretary Peggy Hatch present special recognition award to the city of West Monroe

DEQ Deputy Secretary Alex Appeaning, Rep. Gordon Dove and DEQ Secretary Peggy Hatch present an ELP award to Southern University.

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DEQ On The Move

Al Hindrichs, environmental scientist, demonstrates the Walnut Bayou model for teachers at the Louisiana Environmental Education Symposium in Shreveport.

Linda Hardy, environmental scientist senior, mans the DEQ booth at the Louisiana Environmental Education Symposium in Shreveport

India Ambeau, DEQ environmental scientist, demonstrates Enviroscape to elementary school children at the Park Forest Math and Science night.

Chris Simms, left, and Russell Clark, right, were honored with legislative resolutions of appreciation for their service in Iraq and Afghanistan. The DEQ employees were presented with the documents by Secretary Hatch.

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Who's Who At DEQ?

Amber Gremillion Litchfield – Legal Division

Litchfield joined DEQ's Legal Division in September 2012. Amber works in the Regulation Development and General Law Section and focuses primarily on public records requests and collections. She received a Bachelor of Arts in political science from LSU and a Juris Doctor from Southern University Law Center. Prior to joining DEQ, Litchfield was employed as a judicial law clerk for the 27th Judicial District Court. She is married to Ryan Litchfield and they have one daughter, Amelia.

Sarah Acosta – Enforcement Division

Acosta has been with DEQ since 2007 when she served as an environmental scientist in air enforcement. Acosta received a B.A. from LSU in environmental management systems with a concentration in resource conservation. She has been promoted to DCLA in air enforcement. In this position, she performs as an advisor and expert to agency staff, the general public, as well as regulated community on matters involving technical aspects of enforcement case development in the area of air quality protection. Acosta serves as a technical advisor for the department on air quality enforcement and compliance issues. Acosta is a mentor for environmental scientists 1, 2 and 3 and provides appropriate air training.

Nicole Anthony – Enforcement Division

Anthony received her Bachelor of Science degree from Alcorn State University in biology/chemistry and a Master of Science degree in environmental chemistry from Southern University. Anthony has been employed with DEQ since 1997 and has worked in permitting, DEQ's laboratory, and the Data Evaluation Assessment and Reporting (DEAR) section. She was named manager of Waste Enforcement in July 2013.

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DEQ Circuit Rider Program

The DEQ Circuit Rider Program started in 2006 and allows personnel in the regions to address and handle certain compliance issues that arise in the field. The program was instituted by the Office of Environmental Compliance to address enforcement actions and streamline the penalty process. The Circuit Riders are housed at the regional offices and serve as a liaison between the regional offices and headquarters.

Right to left – Lynette Billelo, circuit rider for the Southeast Region, Corwin Washington, circuit rider for the Northeast, Northwest and Kisatchie Regions and Diane Matthews, circuit rider for the Acadiana, Southwest and Capital Regions.

Louisiana Department Of Environmental Quality's Fourth Quarter Summaries

4th Quarter 2013 Enforcement Actions:
http://www.deq.louisiana.gov/portal/tabid/225/Default.aspx

4th Quarter 2013 Settlement Agreements:
http://www.deq.louisiana.gov/portal/tabid/2838/Default.aspx

4th Quarter 2013 Air Permits:
http://www.deq.louisiana.gov/portal/tabid/2922/Default.aspx

4th Quarter 2013 Water Permits:
http://www.deq.louisiana.gov/portal/tabid/2899/Default.aspx

4th Quarter 2013 Solid and Hazardous Waste Permits:
http://www.deq.louisiana.gov/portal/tabid/2586/Default.aspx