



State of Louisiana

Department of Environmental Quality



Kathleen Babineaux Blanco
Governor

Mike McDaniel, Ph.D.
Secretary

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Governor proclaims May as Clean Air Month

BATON ROUGE – Ozone season, which officially begins May 1, is upon us. And what an important ozone season it is. The five-parish Baton Rouge area is trying to reach attainment and avoid the stigma and regulatory consequences that come along with being classified as severe by the Environmental Protection Agency.

To help kick off the season, Gov. Kathleen Babineaux Blanco has declared May as Clean Air Month throughout the state. Most of Louisiana is in attainment for all national air standards. However, East Baton Rouge, West Baton Rouge, Iberville, Livingston and Ascension parishes make up the five-parish area that fails to meet national ozone standards.

When conditions are right, the air pollutant known as ozone is formed. Ozone is a prime ingredient in smog and is detrimental to air quality. It is formed by a chemical reaction on hot days when the pollutants, known as nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compounds, cook under a hot sun. It's most prevalent between May 1 and Sept. 30.

DEQ is attacking the problem with the help of industry, media and the community. DEQ and 16 Baton Rouge-area industries worked together to install 22 new air monitors.

Using the monitors, plus the 13 already existing monitors, DEQ will quickly notice when there is the possibility of ozone formation. A communications plan was created last season where an ozone warning is sent to industries and the media when ozone formation is probable.

When everyone takes necessary steps to limit the formation of ozone-causing pollutants, there is a chance the ozone threat may pass. Some steps the public can take include put off mowing the yard, filling up the vehicle after 6 p.m. and limit driving time. Industry can put off some of its ozone-contributing processes until after 6 p.m.

“We are taking the necessary steps to make sure all of Louisiana meets the federal air quality standard,” said DEQ Secretary Mike McDaniel. “Most of the state meets the standards for all federal criteria. In the Baton Rouge area, DEQ, industry and the community are working together to reach the attainment standards for ozone.”