



DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

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For Immediate Release
May 24, 2006

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DEQ, others discuss steps to improve air quality

BATON ROUGE – The Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality participated in a press conference with several other groups today at DEQ headquarters in Baton Rouge to discuss air quality and the upcoming ozone season.

Parish presidents of the nonattainment area, businesses, education and community leaders provided insight on projects they will use this summer to help reduce ozone formation in the five-parish nonattainment area. Those parishes are East and West Baton Rouge, Iberville, Livingston and Ascension. The area is considered marginal for the EPA 8-hour standard for air quality. This year, the area gained more than 100,000 vehicles. DEQ is concerned about emissions from the additional vehicles and gasoline powered engines. These engines emit nitrous oxides, also known as NOx, which is a key ingredient to ozone formation.

In 2005, DEQ ramped up its data-gathering efforts on ozone-forming emissions. In addition to department's 14 air monitors, area industries installed 22 new air monitors, more fence-line monitoring and internal audits. This effort led to a reduction in emissions of volatile organic compounds, or VOCs, which mix with NOx to form ozone.

This year, each resident in the area can contribute to reaching attainment and improving air quality. Residents can help reduce NOx formation and pollution by driving less, fueling and mowing after 6 p.m., conserving energy in homes and using electric starters when starting the grill.

“Reducing ozone formation will take a community effort – business, industry and the public. Louisiana meets all other standards for pollutants so it would be beneficial for the state to reach the ozone standard and meet all standards,” said DEQ Secretary Mike McDaniel. “With the new technology, additional monitoring and other efforts made by industry, it is important for everyone to take whatever steps they can to reduce emissions. These steps will benefit the community's health and bolster the economy in the state.”

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