



DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

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Report shows air quality improved in most of state, Baton Rouge fails ozone test

BATON ROUGE – Except for the Baton Rouge area, Louisiana’s air quality continues to improve, according an American Lung Association report released today. The American Lung Association judged the state’s air quality based on information from 2002-2004 that was provided by the Department of Environmental Quality.

The American Lung Association issues counties, or parishes in Louisiana’s case, throughout the country grades for the pollutants ozone and particulate matter. The five-parish Baton Rouge area was listed in a tie at No. 20 for “most polluted ozone cities.” Three parishes received an “F” for ozone, which is down from four in 2004 and 10 in 2003. East Baton Rouge, West Baton Rouge and Iberville parishes each received an F. Three parishes were given an A. Those were Beauregard, Lafourche and Orleans.

Like in previous years, the entire state received a “pass” for particulate matter. The Acadiana region was recognized as being especially clean.

“Fortunately, two cities earned spots on the list of the cleanest cities for ozone, Fort Polk South-De Ridder and Houma-Bayou Cane-Thibodaux,” the report said. “Lafayette-Acadiana landed on the list of the cleanest cities for short-term particulate levels. In addition, several parishes improved air quality enough to raise their grades; most notably Jefferson Parish improved to a D from an F in ozone levels.”

East Baton Rouge Parish had the most elevated ozone days in the state. There were 24 days that were unhealthy for sensitive groups, six days registered as unhealthy and 0 very unhealthy days, based on the U.S. Environmental Quality’s Air Quality Index. The most elevated county in the nation was Kern County in California with 242 unhealthy for sensitive groups, 66 for unhealthy and 1 for very unhealthy.

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