DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

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DEQ to start classes for owners of smaller water discharge permits

BATON ROUGE -- The Department of Environmental Quality will hold its first training class for owners and operators of small-size wastewater treatment plants and car washes with Louisiana Pollutant Discharge Elimination System general permits. Wastewater treatment plants with a Class I or II sanitary discharge general permit or a vehicle wash wastewater general permit are eligible.

The free class will be held on March 28 from 8:30-11:30 a.m. in the St. Tammany Parish Administrative Complex at 21490 Koop Drive in Mandeville. To sign up, call 225-219-3931 or 3717. Check DEQ's web site, www.deq.louisiana.gov, under the water enforcement section to see when additional classes throughout the state will be available.

The class is modeled after DEQ's highly successful underground storage tank class which has been ongoing for nearly a year. Like the UST class, the water permit class is geared toward educating people who own or operate certain business on permit requirements, water-quality regulations, what constitutes a violation and enforcement actions.

"DEQ has learned from the UST school success in the past year, that education is an effective way to help some businesses stay in compliance of the environmental regulations," said Harold Leggett, Assistant Secretary for the Office of Environmental Compliance. "By helping small business owners and operators understand their permits and by teaching them how to abide by the permits, it reduces the chances of environmental mishaps."

Class I permits cover facilities discharging less than 5,000 gallons per day of sanitary wastewater. Class II permits are for those facilities discharging less than 25,000 gallons per day. Facilities covered in both class I and II permits include residential subdivisions, trailer parks, laundromats, restaurants, schools, shopping centers and office buildings.

The vehicle wash wastewater permit is for any discharge from a wash rack for the exterior washing of vehicles, boats, aircraft and heavy equipment in addition to sanitary wastewater totaling less than 25,000 gallons per day. Some examples include commercial vehicle washes that utilize tunnel, rollover/pressure, wand and portable pressure washing equipment. The permit covers facilities such as gas stations, truck stops, convenience stores, detail shops, coin-operated and brushless vehicle washes and operators of portable pressure washing equipment.

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