



DISCOVER DEQ

LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY NEWSLETTER



January 2018 Issue Number: 72

What's Inside?

2017 Accomplishments

Message from the Secretary

EPA administrator visits LDEQ

Sutherlin briefs attorneys on RECAP

New Orleans Clean Coalition Meeting

LDEQ's Aquifer Protection Team and the Louisiana Rural Water Association host a film screening on Water Infrastructure

EPA National Air Quality Conference held in Austin, Texas

Register for the Louisiana Environmental Education State Symposium in February

Post-holiday recycling reduces litter, promotes sustainability

LDEQ On The Move

Who's Who At LDEQ?

CONNECT WITH LDEQ



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2017 Accomplishments

To have any valid vision of where you are going, you need to know where you have been. A look back on 2017 is in order as we change our calendars to 2018. It was a year of change at LDEQ, with an old office returning to active status, air quality continuing to get better and storms and spills challenging the agency's emergency response capability.

Under the guidance of LDEQ Secretary Dr. Chuck Carr Brown, agency personnel trained, they studied, they planned and they listened to the public through all of the agency's outreach media, but especially one-to-one. The staff renewed their commitment to the agency's core values and stepped up the meet all challenges, serving the people of Louisiana and protecting human health and the environment.

Here are some of the highlights of the year gone by:

- EPA designates five-parish Baton Rouge area in attainment for ozone March 21. The area includes Ascension, East Baton Rouge, Iberville, Livingston and West Baton Rouge parishes.
- Dr. Brown spoke at Leaders Against Litter event on the Capitol steps with members of participating agencies and organizations to share ideas and methods with which to combat highway litter across the state.
- Dr. Brown spoke about the VW Settlement at Louisiana Clean Fuels Odyssey Day Event. VW settlement portion to Louisiana is \$18 million. LDEQ and the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources (LDNR) will pool their shares to fund worthy applications, ie., the replacement of or repowering of publicly owned school buses as provided in the Consent Decree and the replacement of or repowering of aging state-owned heavy equipment fleet vehicles that are eligible under the mitigation trust. The vehicles will be replaced with new cleaner vehicles and or new cleaner burning engines. The agencies are in the final phase of implementing the matching grants.



Dr. Brown provides remarks on litter abatement at the Leaders Against Litter event.

Continued on page 2



DISCOVER DEQ

LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY NEWSLETTER



January 2018 Issue Number: 72

- Flood recovery efforts in the Greater Baton Rouge area as a result of the Great Flood of August 2016 continued as residents, including many LDEQ employees, began returning to their homes. LDEQ continued its role in oversight of debris removal.
- LDEQ worked with Denka to craft an Administrative Order on Consent (AOC), a legal contract, in which Denka agreed to install a series of new control technology measures designed to reduce emissions of the chemical chloroprene by 85 percent from the facility's 2014 baseline chloroprene emissions. Under the AOC, emissions reductions devices will be installed on a set schedule, culminating with the installation of the Regenerative Thermal Oxidizer (RTO) by the end of the fourth quarter of 2017. All phases of the project were installed on time and are now operational.
- LDEQ's Office of Environmental Assessment was re-established with Roger Gingles as administrator. Four divisions report under the Office, Air Planning and Assessment, Remediation, Underground Storage Tanks and Water Planning and Assessment.
- EPA approved Louisiana's clean-air plan for regional haze. The plan will reduce regional haze in Louisiana and meets federal Clean Air Act requirements. EPA determined Louisiana's plan establishes goals to make reasonable progress toward reducing haze, a long-term strategy and technical requirements for electric-generating and non-electric-generating units to meet requirements of the federal Clean Air Act's Regional Haze Rule. This rule requires states to make progress toward achieving natural visibility conditions in some of the nation's most treasured wilderness areas. In Louisiana, this includes the Breton National Wildlife Refuge off the state's eastern coast.



At least 4,584 pounds of food was collected from the food drive by LDEQ

- LDEQ's fundraising and food collection efforts this year brought in \$1,932.97 in monetary donations and 4,584 pounds of non-perishable and perishable food donations. Food was collected from perishable donations as well as the department-wide "fill the box" non-perishable food drive to support various food banks across the state. The "Together We're Fighting Hunger" campaign's contributions amounted to more than 11,000 meals provided to citizens in need.
- LDEQ welcomed a Nigerian delegation to Louisiana. LDEQ, doing its part for international relations, hosted a delegation of seven senators and eight staff members of the Upstream Petroleum Committee of the Nigerian Senate May 9. The Nigerians were on a five-day visit to the U.S. sponsored by the New Orleans Citizen Diplomacy Council in partnership with the U.S. Department of State. Dr. Brown extended a personal welcome to the visiting dignitaries, and spoke about the challenges an environmental agency faces in 21st Century America, including potential changes at EPA.

- LDEQ began working with the newly formed Louisiana Recycling Coalition. Litter and waste in the environment is a huge concern in Louisiana and the Louisiana Recycling Coalition (LRC) plans to address the problem head on.
- LDEQ personnel attended the Joint Hazardous Waste & Materials Management Training Conference hosted by the Association of State and Territorial Solid Waste Management Officials, Inc., (ASTSWMO) in Oklahoma City Aug. 15-17.

Continued on page 3



DISCOVER DEQ

LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY NEWSLETTER



January 2018 Issue Number: 72

- Acacia Shriners recognize LDEQ in support for the Shriners' fundraising effort in July 2017. The fundraising drive raised nearly \$1,000 for the Shriner's Hospital for Children in Shreveport.
- Dr. Brown met with members of the Alsen Community to discuss their environmental concerns.
- Two outreach visits by Dr. Brown were conducted in St. Gabriel and St. Rose. Citizens in both of these communities have had issues and concerns with nearby facilities. Dr. Brown provided information on LDEQ's mission in reducing those emissions.
- Dr. Brown and LDEQ staff members met with three members of the St. Bernard Parish Council and the Parish President during St. Bernard Day at the Pentagon Barracks on the Capitol grounds May 10 and gave the visiting dignitaries a short update on air quality concerns in St. Bernard Parish.
- The Drinking Water Protection Team canvassed the state, giving presentations to the public to promote the importance of protecting drinking water, understanding aquifers and conveying the potential susceptibility of public drinking water sources.
- An in-house committee to find solutions for landfill odors was formed by Dr. Brown and the LDEQ Executive Staff.
- Emergency Response logged in more than 7,018 response calls during the 2017 calendar year. These included complaint calls, releases/spills, underground storage tank releases/remediation events and other inquiries. Some calls are handled via phone, while others require a physical visit. All calls are responded to and some cases can extend for a year or longer, depending on the nature of the issue.
- After the landfall of Hurricane Harvey, the Southwest Regional Office in Lake Charles worked with local government leaders to set up waste handling/staging sites, as there were a few areas of localized flooding. The flooding impacted several homes. A few drums were noted in the Louisiana marsh during a flyover out of the Texas response. SWRO personnel met with the expected Responsible Party to assess and collect the drums.
- The Enforcement Division logged 50 legal settlements for 2017, totaling more than \$1,562,626.
- An Emission Reduction Credit Conference, hosted by LDEQ and the Baton Rouge Clean Air Coalition was held Jan. 26. The goal is to control pollutant air emissions to spur economic growth through the issuance of emission reduction credits in a banking rule. LDEQ's proposal is to allow businesses to claim bankable credits for reductions in emissions from mobile sources.
- LDEQ assisted citizens in the aftermath of two tornadoes that touched down in the southeast part of the state Feb. 7. Emergency Responders cleaned up debris and helped to identify health and environmental impacts to the area.



LDEQ geologist Jesse Means gives a presentation about aquifer locations and drinking water protection measures at a community meeting at Many City Hall in Sabine Parish.

Continued on page 4



DISCOVER DEQ

LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY NEWSLETTER



January 2018 Issue Number: 72



LDEQ Environmental Scientist David Wagenecht hosts the video as Emily Barlett, LDEQ graphic designer and videographer, films.

- LDEQ launched a YouTube channel with videos on different topics that focus on environmental issues airing each month. The videos are designed to give the public insight into LDEQ's responsibilities, topics of concern or the agency's involvement in environmental events.
- Parish Resource Book provided to Parish Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness coordinators in the state. The Resource provides contact info and debris management documentation designed to assist parishes in the event of a natural or catastrophic disaster.
- National Lakes Assessment conducted in Louisiana by LDEQ under EPA guidance. The effort reviews the state's lakes, ponds and reservoirs to assess the ecological, water quality and recreational indicators with regard to stressors to those water bodies. Surveys were conducted by LDEQ staff.

- LDEQ's Criminal Investigation Section hosted several Environmental Law Enforcement Training workshops in the state. The goal is to inform law enforcement agents throughout the country on existing, new and changing laws that are specific to environmental crimes.
- LDEQ actively involved in the Mississippi River/Gulf of Mexico Watershed Nutrient Hypoxia Task Force to address nutrient management within the basin. The Force studies the causes and effects of eutrophication in the Gulf, while coordinating activities to reduce the effects of hypoxia.
- Keep Louisiana Beautiful conference held at LDEQ headquarters, provides resources and education for those interested in establishing zero-waste practices, recycling programs and beautification projects.
- LDEQ supports National Drive Electric Week to encourage electric vehicle use across the state in the push to reduce vehicle emissions.





Message from the Secretary

Chuck Carr Brown, Ph.D.

Records fell in Louisiana during the cold snap just after Martin Luther King Day. Not only did it freeze here, Louisiana got sleet and snow. It was our second snow of the winter. For people at headquarters and in the regional offices, ice presented a slippery hazard, both on roads and sidewalks. Additionally, the bigger problem for LDEQ emergency responders was the effect the bitter cold had on refineries and plants.

A couple of plants had to employ emergency flaring when cold weather caused problems with production processes. Valves and piping are susceptible to freezing temperatures, and routing emissions to flares is a backup procedure to keep the public safe. One plant lost its water supply and shut down completely. Some of these problems are ongoing, and you may see some flares continue to be visible from interstates and roads. When you see one, know that LDEQ has either responded or is on the way to ensure that air monitoring is conducted.

You probably are aware that the Legislature convenes March 12. That date's just around the corner. Budget concerns have dominated discussion of the upcoming session with the governor repeatedly warning of the \$1 billion fiscal cliff. It's not just talk. While LDEQ is a self-funded organization, we all have to share the pain if proposed cuts have to be made. Thus as a part of our core values we all must continue to strive for continuous improvements through efficient and effective work practices.

Also, as we look at the clients we serve, I am going to promote the value of regionalizing and consolidation of networks and services in areas like sewer and water systems. I will be informing local elected officials of the benefits of reducing personnel and maintenance cost, and the benefits of an economy of scale. They will be encouraged to be better and smarter about how they use their resources. This is what I am talking about when I tell you we have to be proactive. Not only do we need to get out in front of our own challenges, we have to help our stakeholders get ahead of their challenges too.

I know that's a big ask. But I also know who I am asking.

Our next holiday is Mardi Gras. It's about two weeks away. Enjoy yourself, catch some beads and stay safe!



Dr. Brown speaks to LDEQ employees during the start of a mock trial held at LDEQ headquarters Jan. 30.



EPA administrator visits LDEQ



EPA Region 6 Administrator Anne Idsal, left, visits with LDEQ Secretary Dr. Chuck Carr Brown.

“I definitely have a state perspective,” Anne Idsal told a group of people at LDEQ Jan.4. Idsal is the new EPA Region 6 administrator, and she was stopping by LDEQ to make a get-acquainted visit. LDEQ Secretary Dr. Chuck Carr Brown welcomed her, and Idsal assured him that “y’all are in the best position to find creative solutions to your problems.”

“We are generally very proactive,” Idsal said. “I’m hoping we can be a model to the other regions and to headquarters.” Idsal said she plans to maximize the impact of federal funding by making sure the right amounts go to the right projects. “I like that philosophy,” Brown told her. “We want to be part of that on the enforcement side.”

Idsal said she wants to hear about state agency needs as soon as possible, so she can plan to help. “I don’t believe in surprises. If there is an opportunity to help deal with things on the front end and not just on the back end, I want to be there.”

Idsal had lunch with Brown and staff, then she was headed back to Texas. She promised to come back to Louisiana soon, said she looks forward to LDEQ staff visiting the EPA Region 6 headquarters in Dallas.

Sutherlin briefs attorneys on RECAP

Sometimes you need to step outside your area of expertise in order to do a better job within your area of expertise. Toxicologist Dr. June Sutherlin helped a group of LDEQ lawyers take step outside their area when she presented a lecture on the Risk Evaluation/Corrective Action Program (RECAP) on Jan. 23.

“I gave them the basic background of RECAP and how it works,” Sutherlin said. “So when they are in dispute resolution with a company, they can understand the technical side of it. They will be able to understand how it (RECAP) is used to make site decisions.” The short course in Room 1051 at the Galvez Building included definitions, uses and history of RECAP.

At the heart of the program, Sutherin told the lawyers, is the responsibility to ensure that risk to human health and the environment is the primary consideration when remedial decisions are made. The people of Louisiana are the primary beneficiaries of the program, Sutherlin pointed out, but the regulated community benefits as well by getting No Further Action at the time of determination (NFAs) letters, certificates of completion, corrective action plan approval and approval of closure plans for waste management units – all through RECAP.

The session lasted more than an hour and included discussion and explanation of screening standards, RECAP management option tiers, groundwater standards, dilution, land use, soil screening standards, standards for different media and much more. Sutherlin said the lawyers were a bright group, and were quick to grasp the technical material she presented. She said she may repeat the presentation for other groups at headquarters who have a need for a better understanding of RECAP.



Attorneys listen as Dr. June Sutherlin explains RECAP MO3.



New Orleans Clean Coalition Meeting

“I’m going to always do what is right for Louisiana,” LDEQ Secretary Dr. Chuck Carr Brown told members of the New Orleans Clean Air Coalition (NOCAC) at the organization’s Jan. 10 meeting.

The secretary was making his first visit to the NOCAC. The organization was started up in late 2015 and early 2016 and is modeled on the Baton Rouge Clean Air Coalition, sharing that group’s goals of cleaner air, ozone reduction and implementation of EPA’s Advance Program locally. The Advance Program promotes local actions in attainment areas to reduce ozone and/or fine particle pollution (PM_{2.5}) to help these areas continue to maintain the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS).

Cleaner air is a complex problem that invites wide-ranging solutions. Brown talked about some of the programs and goals he is excited about, including stimulation of alternative fuels use and infrastructure to support that use. The disbursing of funds from the recent settlement from the Volkswagen case is an example of applying strategic stimulus, Brown said.

“Our share is \$18 million,” Brown said. Not a huge sum, he pointed out, but by using those funds in a manner to get the highest return for every dollar spent, the state can reap more benefit than \$18 million would seemingly bring. LDEQ is one of the administrators of the settlement in Louisiana along with Louisiana Department of Natural Resources (LDNR) and Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD). “DOTD is replacing diesel trucks. DNR and LDEQ got together and tried to find the best bang for the buck,” he said. “School buses were targeted.”

Every parish and most municipalities have a bus fleet to transport students to schools. The two agencies, LDEQ and LDNR, decided to target those fleets and offer them a funds matching deal that would help them replace their higher emissions vehicles with buses that run on alternative fuels. “We will put \$4 million in buses,” Brown said. Systems that chose high efficiency diesel buses will get 25 percent of the cost for approved vehicles while those systems that pick alternative fuels vehicles will get 50 percent of the cost of each approved vehicle, he said. He added that the program will be spread out over three years and that the \$4 million will be an annual figure. Over the three-year period, \$12 million in matching funds will be disbursed. So far seven parishes have qualified for the program, Brown said, but those parishes have not yet been announced. “One parish is actually going to buy 50 propane buses.”

Brown also outlined his plans for an alternative fuels corridor. It’s a federal designation, and once the agency gets approval, signage marking the corridors will go up, he said. The OK comes from the Federal Highway Administration, which is promoting the designations with a goal of achieving strategic deployment of fueling infrastructure in the designated corridors by the end of 2020. Brown said he foresees a time when fueling hubs will offer compressed natural gas fill-ups, charging outlets for electric vehicles (EVs), propane fill-ups and any other alternative fuels drivers may demand. Shopping areas and recreational areas might be incorporated into the fueling hubs, he said, as well as restaurants and entertainment venues. On the road to the future, a night out and fueling up may be a one-stop adventure. Some seed money for EV charging stations at fueling hubs will be available through the VW Settlement too, he said, as part of program called Electrify America. The \$2 billion program is designed to provide infrastructure for and education about Zero Emission Vehicles (ZEV) over a 10-year period ending in 2027. No Louisiana locations were included in Cycle 1 of Electrify America, but more locations will be added to the program as more cycles are implemented. Brown is confident at least one Louisiana location and probably several more will be part of the program eventually.



LDEQ Secretary Dr. Chuck Carr Brown speaks to the New Orleans Clean Air Coalition at the Port of New Orleans.



LDEQ's Aquifer Protection Team and the Louisiana Rural Water Association host a film screening on Water Infrastructure



The documentary was shown at the historic Sabine Theatre in the town of Many.

The opening statement in the event flyer is profound: “scary as it may sound, America’s aging water system is in need of an overhaul.”

And that is the overall theme of the film, “Liquid Assets: the Story of our Water Infrastructure,” a 90-minute documentary screened to the public at the historic Sabine Theatre in downtown Many Jan. 25.

Hosted by LDEQ, the Louisiana Rural Water Association and the Sabine Parish Drinking Water Protection Committee, the documentary tells the story of essential infrastructure systems, starting with the history of how systems began in the United States and including updates on where many of them stand today.

Replete with interviews from local, state and federal environmental protection experts, the film’s message is educational in tone, detailing how those complex and aging systems – deep underground and subject to the rigors of time (some systems are more than a century

old) – are critical for basic sanitation, public safety and economic development. Water systems are the driving force behind several other mechanisms that support many aspects of our daily lives.

Starting with a historical overview of water infrastructure, the film included several cutaway diagrams showing how drinking water, wastewater and storm water systems function. Key points of the film are an explanation of how drinking water is accessed, how wastewater is treated and what becomes of storm water runoff. Easy to understand graphics describing those systems, along with examples of cities and towns in America undergoing critical infrastructural concerns are included to support the interviews.

Shanna Mason, a geologist with LDEQ’s Aquifer Evaluation and Protection Team, provided an introduction to the audience of more than 50 in attendance – many of whom were Advance Placement Biology students at Converse High in Sabine Parish. “This documentary is an important educational tool that showcases the history of our country’s infrastructure, the operations and maintenance work that goes behind these systems, and the main reasons that infrastructure is failing in some parts of our nation,” Mason said. “We’re excited to have the students here this evening because they will be the ones who inherit these problems in the future. It is important for them to understand how these systems work not only so that they can properly maintain them, but also to help solve some of the major issues by ushering in the next generation of water infrastructure technology.”

The documentary highlighted various communities from across the country, showing the hidden water infrastructure assets, demonstrating watershed protection approaches and illustrating twenty-first century solutions. For more information on the film, please visit: www.liquidassets.psu.edu.



EPA National Air Quality Conference held in Austin, Texas

The EPA National Air Quality Conference was held in Austin, Texas, in late January. More than 350 attendees on both technical and communication tracks enjoyed presentations on Air Now, health issues connected to air quality, the Air Quality Index from A to Z, emerging technologies, wildfires and smoke and citizen monitoring.

The conference was co-sponsored by the Association of Air Pollution Control Agencies (AAPCA) and the National Association of Clean Air Agencies (NACAA).

Participants discussed the health effects of fine particle pollution (PM 2.5) and air pollution on the heart and the lungs. EPA has a Healthy Heart program and tool kit to raise awareness of heart and vascular programs linked to PM2.5 in the air. You can acquire a Healthy Heart Toolkit that provides information and resources for patients and public health professionals by going to <https://www.epa.gov/air-research/healthy-heart-toolkit-and-research>. After opening remarks from Phil Dickerson, EPA AirNow program director, Dr. Bill Kohl, III and Wayne Cascio, EPA, spoke extensively about health effects and pollution.

“Air now was developed by EPA in 1998 and is celebrating 20 years,” Dickerson said. “AirNow-International (AirNow-I) is helping countries and regions around the world inform the public about the quality of the air they breathe.”



Susan Stone, U.S. EPA senior environmental health scientist, opens the conference. Phil Dickerson, Air Now director; John White, Air Now program manager and Jamie Arno, Sacramento Metropolitan wait their turn to speak.

Air Now and its resources can be accessed at www.airnow.gov and Air Now International can be accessed at <https://cfpub.epa.gov/airnow/index.cfm?action=airnow.intlpartners>.

Citizen monitoring and hand held sensors were another topic of discussion. Emerging technology allows citizens and even group networks to monitor the air informally. This promotes community engagement, and the goal is to be able to pair community involvement with academic research and qualified data. In-depth community training, protocols, expectations and finding reliable low-cost sensors are a part of the puzzle. The general challenge is how to align local and community monitoring with regulated monitoring in a meaningful and useful way. In response to the challenge, EPA has developed a Citizens Science Toolbox. The EPA’s Air Sensor Toolbox for Citizen Scientists provides information and guidance on new low-cost compact technologies for measuring air quality. Since citizens are interested in learning about air quality, this tool provides citizens with resources to effectively collect, analyze, interpret and



Jean Kelly, LDEQ, Susan Stone, EPA and Stephanie Steigman with NAAQA visit during the break.

Continued on page 8



DISCOVER DEQ

LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY NEWSLETTER



January 2018 Issue Number: 72

communicate air quality data. “Measure, learn and share” is the theme. The toolbox can be accessed at <https://www.epa.gov/air-research/air-sensor-toolbox-citizen-scientists>.

Another topic discussed at the conference was smoke pollution and wildfires. While wildfires may not affect us directly, smoke pollution does, and forecasting the effect is important to protect.

The technical group learned about new tools for air quality modeling and forecasting, web-based interactive tools, the future of air quality forecasting, wildfire and exceptional event forecasting and much more.

The future of air quality forecasting and communication presents many challenges but conferences like the Air Quality Conference allow concerned people from all over the United States and beyond to network and share ideas and solutions.

Register for the Louisiana Environmental Education State Symposium in February

The Louisiana Environmental Education State Symposium has provided a place for formal and non-formal environmental educators to gather, teach, learn and connect for more than two decades. Sponsored by Shell and hosted by the Louisiana Environmental Education Commission, Louisiana Environmental Education Association, and the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, this two-day event provides an exciting opportunity to join environmental educators from every corner of Louisiana and surrounding states as we meet to share environmental education teaching techniques and practices, discover new research and information, and spend time discussing our experiences as educators.

This year’s event will take place Friday and Saturday, Feb. 23 and 24, at the Baton Rouge Marriott. The theme this year is “Green STEM,” which focuses on environmental science, technology, engineering and mathematics education, and the exciting career opportunities opening to students now and in the decades to come.

On Friday, the conference features your choice of five daylong optional short courses, hosted by leaders in the environmental education community and designed to provide seven hours of instruction on a current environmental education topic. These events, which can be tours, hands-on workshops or both, will take place at venues around the Baton Rouge area. See <http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/louisiana-environmental-education-symposium#shortcourses> for more information.

On Saturday, presenter will provide hour long-concurrent sessions grouped by grade level (see <http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/symposium-presenter-lineup>) and an all-new round-table session that offers attendees five 10-minute mini-sessions on topics of their choice.

Meals are provided and attendees from outside the Baton Rouge area can qualify for lodging assistance to help pay for the cost of a hotel stay. Download the form at http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/sites/default/files/doc/document/41682-2018-lodging-assistance-application/lodging_assistance_application_2018.doc for more information.

Registration is \$60 and the optional Friday short course, lunch included, is \$20. Find more information and register at <http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/louisiana-environmental-education-symposium>.



Post-holiday recycling reduces litter, promotes sustainability

The beginning of a new year always carries the remnants of the holiday season typically in the form of cardboard, wrapping paper, batteries, champagne bottles and a host of other items that can be recycled or reused. While much of this is simply thrown out, most of it can be recycled and kept out of landfills.



Recycling bins, such as these at Lowe's store #2484 in Baton Rouge, will accept used CFL bulbs, rechargeable batteries, plastic grocery bags and cell phones.

Even well after the holidays have passed, sustainability is a practice that anyone can take an active part in, and it can become an inherent part of your lifestyle. The majority of waste can be diverted from landfills through daily, personal responsibility.

Much like the automatic, learned behavior akin to putting on your seatbelt when you enter a car, recycling many of your household discards can become an instinctive response. Actively separating recyclables from your trash bin drastically reduces what goes into landfills, thereby reducing the burden on those landfills while finding a new life for a dead light bulb, used cardboard box or empty aluminum can.

While some may complain that there are no locations to which to send recycled material or that a recycling program doesn't exist in their city or parish, there are options available. Just a quick check on available resources where you live will uncover locations throughout the state where consumers may get rid of plastic bags, CFL bulbs,

used motor oil, electronic goods, batteries and the like. Many parish recycling offices can provide a list of locations, such as those found in East Baton Rouge Parish at www.brgov.com/recycle.

One example of a convenient location for free recycling drop off can be found at Lowe's. Over the last two decades, the home improvement company has ramped up their waste reduction, recycling and sustainability program allowing a free and easy way in which customers can be proactive and do their part.

In 2004, Lowe's began partnering with Call2Recycle to recycle rechargeable batteries. So far, they have collected more than 3 million pounds of rechargeable batteries collected from customers. Their recycling effort currently includes compact fluorescent light bulbs, used plastic bags and even cell phones. Collecting these items for reuse produces not only an environmental benefit – it also makes smart business sense.

"Any time you can take away recycled items from the trash, it has an impact on cost, so we encourage the practice of sustainability in all facets of our operations," Nathan McCartney, assistant store manager at Lowe's store #2484 in Baton Rouge, said.

And training is a big part of that practice.

"We are training head cashiers to recycle certain returned items, such as broken bulbs, by placing those into the recycling bin. We try to model that behavior as a common practice." A contract company visits the store once a week to collect the recycling as well as drums containing hazardous materials collected as a result of chemical spill cleanups that may have occurred in the store. "Hazard training is a high emphasis for us going into the next fiscal year," McCartney added.

Continued on page 11



DISCOVER DEQ

LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY NEWSLETTER



January 2018 Issue Number: 72

According to their website, the home improvement company's recycling numbers have grown each year as they've raised awareness around their recycling centers near the entrance of their U.S.-based stores. Typically located near the customer service desk, sorted bins are in place where customers may simply drop in a used rechargeable battery, old cell phone, compact fluorescent light bulb or used plastic shopping bags.

Finding places such as these that offer quick, free and easy recycling options can really make an impact on what goes into landfills, especially in rural areas in Louisiana where town, municipal or parish recycling isn't readily available. Many home improvement stores, automotive repair shops, non-profit recycling centers and other locations collect recycled items, free of charge. It's just a matter of seeking those out and spreading the word.

With regard to used automotive batteries, motor oil, paint, electronics, white goods and waste tires, household hazardous materials collection days are also offered in several parishes in the state. Those events typically allow the drop off of those items in an organized, streamlined manner.

So, check with your city or parish for recycling locations near you, or how to procure a curbside recycling bin.

Everyone can do their part to reduce, recycle and reuse. Together, we can collectively be a part of the solution instead of the problem.

For more information, please visit: <http://deq.louisiana.gov/page/recycling-resources-and-recyclers>.

Tips On How You Can Make A Difference

- Use resources such as water, fuel and materials more efficiently and responsibly to minimize your environmental footprint
- Check your local city or parish recycling office for information on what materials are accepted. If not available, ask for info regarding the nearest recycling location
- Seek out locations that accept recycling, such as home improvement stores, automotive repair shops, household hazardous materials collection events and non-profits
- Turn off your lights and electronics when not in use
- Spread the word to engage friends, relatives and co-workers on the importance of conserving resources, reducing waste, recycling and reuse
- Consider trading or bartering items that can find new life in another home, or donating serviceable items to a thrift store or charitable organization
- Report any illegal activities such as waste dumping to law enforcement and LDEQ's incident report hotline: 1-888-763-5424



LDEQ On The Move



LDEQ Geologist Mary Gentry gives a presentation to the Groundwater Management Districts Association Conference in Baton Rouge. The presentation covered the role of geology in the failure of levees in New Orleans during Hurricane Katrina and the building of the Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System. The event was held Wednesday to Friday, Jan. 17-19.



DEQ Environmental Scientist David Wagenecht describes the air sampling and monitoring equipment inside the Mobile Air Monitoring Lab to chemistry students from Sulphur High School Jan. 25. The discussion was part of Samsung's Solve for Tomorrow educational event, where winners will receive thousands of dollars in Samsung technology to advance their scientific endeavors. LDEQ teamed up and assisted the Sulphur High students in their study on auto emissions reduction through carpooling by taking measurements of vehicle emissions at three traffic lights around the school. The competition calls for students and teachers to solve real-world problems in their community through science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics.



LDEQ Attorney Perry Theriot gives an overview on the judicial procedures during the start of a mock trial held at LDEQ headquarters Jan. 30. The event was held to give inspectors, enforcement, emergency response and assessment staff an overview of how a trial functions; specifically in regard to providing concise testimony, and properly documenting events in compliance orders, field interview forms and supporting documentation.



Who's Who At LDEQ?



Erin Lombard – Environmental Scientist – Air Field Services

Lombard is a native of Baton Rouge. She attended Scotlandville Magnet High School and was named Student of the Year during her senior year. She went on to attend Louisiana State University, majoring in chemistry and minoring in business. Lombard is currently an environmental scientist in the Air Planning and Assessment Division.

"I am an outgoing person who loves to entertain, cook, and travel. Among my many habits, making new memories is by far my favorite. I hope that during my time here, I can truly play a part in making a difference in the environment."

Alissa Cockerham – Environmental Scientist 4 -- Enforcement/Air Permit Compliance

Cockerham, a 15 year employee with LDEQ, was recently promoted to environmental scientist 4 in Enforcement/Air Compliance.

She graduated from Southeastern Louisiana University with a Bachelor of Science in biological science and a minor in chemistry in 2001. She previously worked at the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry from 2002 to 2003 as an agriculture specialist. In 2003, she began working at LDEQ as an environmental scientist in Waste Enforcement before transferring to Enforcement/Air Compliance in 2015.



Amanda LeBlanc – Environmental Scientist – Air Field Services, Southwest Regional Office

LeBlanc grew up in Arkansas, but moved to Lafayette when she was 15. She graduated from Teurlings Catholic High School in 2005 and the University of Louisiana at Lafayette in 2009.

After receiving a Bachelor of Science in biology, LeBlanc became a certified divemaster, which afforded her the opportunity to travel. She is thrilled to be a part of the LDEQ ambient air monitoring division, and hopes to serve the State of Louisiana well.



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January 2018 Issue Number: 72

Louisiana Department Of Environmental Quality's Fourth Quarter Summaries

Fourth Quarter 2017 Enforcement Actions:

<http://deq.louisiana.gov/page/enforcement-actions>

Fourth Quarter 2017 Settlement Agreements:

<http://deq.louisiana.gov/page/enforcement-division>

Fourth Quarter 2017 Air Permits:

<http://deq.louisiana.gov/page/permits-issued-by-calendar-quarter>

Fourth Quarter 2017 Water Permits:

<http://deq.louisiana.gov/page/lpdes>

Fourth Quarter 2017 Solid and Hazardous Waste Permits:

<http://deq.louisiana.gov/page/waste-permits>

