



# DISCOVER DEQ

LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY NEWSLETTER



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## LDEQ's 2021 Year in Review

### **LDEQ responded to a number of weather related emergencies, ending the year with Hurricane Ida**

LDEQ's Emergency Response Division led a multi-media response during a particularly busy storm and hurricane season across the state. Emergency Declarations and Amendments were issued directing the emergency response protocol and agency mechanisms during the damage assessment and recovery process.

LDEQ collaborated with several local, parish, state and federal entities during each event's complete response, including pre-storm safety protocols, communications with facilities and pre-/post-storm planning, orphan drum locations, facility fire/safety issues, overall damage assessment (ground and overflights) and post-storm evaluation and recovery.

The year began with an unprecedented winter weather event in February, which brought heavy rains, flash flooding and wintery weather including ice and snow. May brought another bout of severe weather in the form of heavy rains, severe storms and more flash flooding.

The 2021 hurricane season also brought Hurricane Ida. Hurricane Ida made landfall in southeast Louisiana, near Port Fourchon, as a Category 4 hurricane on Aug. 29 – the 16th anniversary of Hurricane Katrina. All of LDEQ's response efforts were conducted while the department continued to perform response objectives regarding Hurricanes Laura, Delta and Zeta from 2020.

### **Updates were issued for 12 fish consumption advisories in 2021**

The Louisiana Departments of Health, Environmental Quality and Wildlife and Fisheries issued a series of updates to six existing fish consumption advisories. The State issues precautionary advisories when unacceptable levels of mercury are detected in fish or shellfish.

The Department of Environmental Quality conducts fish sampling. LDH then uses this data to determine the need for additional advisories or to modify existing advisories. Each advisory lists the specific fish, makes consumption recommendations and outlines the geographic boundaries of the affected waterways.

Updates were issued for:

Amite River Drainage Basin • Blind River • Bogue Falaya and Tchefuncte Rivers • Tickfaw River Drainage Basin • Bayou Chene and Bayou Lacassine • Bayou Nezpique • Big Alabama Bayou • Little Alabama Bayou • Calcasieu River Drainage Basin • Old River (Niblett Bluff in Calcasieu Parish) • Bayou Liberty • Tangipahoa River •

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The full text for each advisory is posted online at [www.ldeq.la.gov/EatSafeFish](http://www.ldeq.la.gov/EatSafeFish) or by calling toll-free 1- 888-293-7020. You may also access the information by downloading the Department of Environmental Quality's app which is available through Google Play (DEQ Fish Advisories) and the App Store (LA Fish Advisories). You can also view the press release at [www.deq.louisiana.gov/assets/docs/News\\_Releases/2021/MercuryandfishconsumptionadvisoriesissuedforsixLouisianawaterways.pdf](http://www.deq.louisiana.gov/assets/docs/News_Releases/2021/MercuryandfishconsumptionadvisoriesissuedforsixLouisianawaterways.pdf) and [www.deq.louisiana.gov/assets/docs/News\\_Releases/2021/Updatesissuefor6fishconsumptionadvisoriesinSoutheasternLouisiana.pdf](http://www.deq.louisiana.gov/assets/docs/News_Releases/2021/Updatesissuefor6fishconsumptionadvisoriesinSoutheasternLouisiana.pdf).

### Forest High School receives LDEQ funding for wastewater treatment upgrades

In West Carroll Parish, Forest High School's wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) is getting an overhaul via a \$237,240 State Revolving Fund Loan from the LDEQ. LDEQ's Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) program provides financial assistance in the form of low interest loans to finance eligible projects, bringing them into compliance with the requirements of the Clean Water Act.

Funding for this program is provided by federal grants and matching funds generated by the program's interest and loan repayments. Interest and loan repayments provide a permanent source for funding in future Louisiana projects. Eligible projects include construction or repair of publicly owned treatment works (POTW) as well as implementation of nonpoint source pollution control and estuary management programs.

The CWSRF program provides financial assistance to any political subdivision, public trust, agency or commission of the state in the form of below market interest loans. Learn more at [www.deq.louisiana.gov/page/clean-water-state-revolving-fund](http://www.deq.louisiana.gov/page/clean-water-state-revolving-fund). To learn more about the project at Forest High School, visit [www.deq.louisiana.gov/assets/ForestHighWWTP\\_PR1.pdf](http://www.deq.louisiana.gov/assets/ForestHighWWTP_PR1.pdf).

### LDEQ issued the 2020 Water Quality Integrated Report

The Louisiana Water Quality Integrated Report (IR) is now available and can be viewed on the agency's website or on a new smartphone application (app). The Louisiana Water Quality IR is the current format for the state's biennial reports on the water quality of Louisiana surface waters.

The IR, formerly known separately as the 305(b) Report and the 303(d) List, is a requirement of the federal Clean Water Act. It is developed every even-numbered year and submitted to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for approval of the 303(d) List portion of the report. The 2020 report, the most recent Water Quality IR, is now final and approved by the EPA as of Feb. 22, 2021.

The full report, including text, assessments and appendices, can be viewed at [www.deq.louisiana.gov/page/2020-water-quality-inventory-integrated-report305b303d](http://www.deq.louisiana.gov/page/2020-water-quality-inventory-integrated-report305b303d).

LDEQ is also offering the report data in an interactive map format online at <https://ldeq.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=8186b44f9a30453483fedd0df4bad9fa> or via a new app.

The new app for smartphones was released March 23 and is available through Google Play and the Apple Store by entering the search term: "LA Water Quality" or looking at State of Louisiana apps. You can also find it at <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=gov.la.deq.irmap>.

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### **LDEQ awarded a \$300,000 EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant**

On June 10, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency awarded the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality's (LDEQ) Brownfields Program \$300,000 to facilitate the redevelopment of vacant and underutilized properties into community assets. The funding comes from EPA's Brownfields and Land Revitalization Program.

The federal grant will be used to assess potential Brownfields sites in historic Algiers and provide environmental assessments and cleanup plans for sites identified in the Brownfields inventory developed by the Regional Planning Commission. To date, over 150 potential Brownfields sites have been identified in the target area, including 13 gas stations, 30 auto repair/maintenance facilities, 25 dry cleaners, 21 sites with industrial/manufacturing history and 32 sites with multiple concerns. Learn more at [www.deq.louisiana.gov/assets/docs/News\\_Releases/2021/LDEQawardeda300thousandEPABrownfieldAssessmentGrant.pdf](http://www.deq.louisiana.gov/assets/docs/News_Releases/2021/LDEQawardeda300thousandEPABrownfieldAssessmentGrant.pdf).

### **LDEQ began the operation of a new Ambient Air Monitoring Site in New Orleans**

After receiving a significant number of odor complaints in the Irish Channel area of New Orleans, LDEQ established an ambient air monitoring site in the area. Located at the Leo Benewell Playspot at the corner of Tchoupitoulas and Pleasant streets, the site measured for hydrogen sulfide (H<sub>2</sub>S), particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>), sulfur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>), methane (CH<sub>4</sub>), non-methane organic compounds (NMOC), total hydrocarbons (THC), volatile organic compounds (VOCs), polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) and meteorological data. The site marks the 39th air monitoring station under LDEQ's purview across the state.

### **LDEQ issued a report on odors in the Irish Channel section of New Orleans**

Since October 2019, LDEQ has been responding to odor complaints in the Irish Channel. LDEQ has followed prescribed response procedures since the complaints began in the Irish Channel area of New Orleans, responding to the complaints and investigating potential sources of odors.

For a three-week period beginning April 5, 2021, the agency prioritized response to odor complaints to address citizen's concerns. LDEQ responders were dispatched to investigate odor complaints as they were received, including on weekends and at night. In addition, LDEQ conducted periodic odor patrols in the area during this time.

During LDEQ's response to complaints, no odors to slight and moderate odors have been observed at any of the complainants' residences nor in the Irish Channel. Slight to moderate odors were observed intermittently near the facilities. All monitor readings were non-detect. LDEQ also sent two Mobile Air Monitoring Laboratories (MAMLs) to the area on two separate occasions. None of the monitoring results indicated any exceedance of any air standard.

The report for the first mission may be found in EDMS Document ID 12506995. To view this report, visit [www.deq.louisiana.gov/assets/docs/News\\_Releases/2021/LDEQissuesreportonodorsinIrishChannelsectionofNewOrleans.pdf](http://www.deq.louisiana.gov/assets/docs/News_Releases/2021/LDEQissuesreportonodorsinIrishChannelsectionofNewOrleans.pdf).

### **LDEQ issued a response to Jefferson, Orleans and Irish Channel Neighbors for Clean Air (JOIN)**

A number of concerns were raised regarding the BWC/Blackwater facility located in Harvey, Louisiana. In particular, the LDEQ was made aware of issues raised in a report entitled "Toxic Fumes and Health Complaints in the Uptown-Harvey Corridor An Analysis of Public Records Related to Operations at BWC/Blackwater Harvey, a Hazardous Material Storage and Transfer Facility" (JOIN Report), compiled by Jefferson, Orleans & Irish Channel Neighbors for Clean Air (JOIN).

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The JOIN Report states that the LDEQ has identified the BWC Harvey, LLC facility (BWC) as the “primary source’ of the toxic fumes.” This statement mischaracterizes LDEQ’s findings. Based on BWC’s activities, BWC was initially identified as a likely potential source of asphalt-based odors as described by the complainants. However, after investigating the odor complaints coming from the Irish Channel, the LDEQ was unable to identify any individual facility as the source of odors reported to the Department. Further, the data from LDEQ’s air monitoring does not show concentrations of toxic air pollutants above any health standard in or around the Irish Channel neighborhood.

Additional information regarding the LDEQ’s investigation and air monitoring conducted in and around the Irish Channel can be found in the LDEQ’s June 2021 Irish Channel Odor Investigation report and can be obtained from the LDEQ’s Electronic Document Management System (EDMS) under AI#2119. To view LDEQ’s full response to the JOIN report, visit [www.deq.louisiana.gov/assets/docs/News\\_Releases/2021/LDEQ-Response-to-JOIN-June-28-2021-Report.pdf](http://www.deq.louisiana.gov/assets/docs/News_Releases/2021/LDEQ-Response-to-JOIN-June-28-2021-Report.pdf).

## **EPA and LDEQ announced a Story Map Resource, an interactive tool created to provide easy access to Hurricane Ida data**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and LDEQ released a new, interactive resource about the federal and state response to Hurricane Ida. This tool, called a story map, integrates maps, photos, data and explanations to help inform the public about response activities and environmental impacts to Louisiana communities following the hurricane.

The story map is available at <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/3c0d86c01bb14f7898ae22251e4f5f1b>.

The story map links information about the response to specific locations, so users can see data such as air monitoring and sampling results as it applies to a certain facility or neighborhood. The story map also features images from EPA’s ASPECT plane, which monitored industrial facilities for releases following the hurricane. Information about LDEQ’s mobile air monitoring is also available. To learn more about the new tool, visit [www.deq.louisiana.gov/assets/docs/News\\_Releases/2021/EPAandLDEQAnnounceStoryMapResource.pdf](http://www.deq.louisiana.gov/assets/docs/News_Releases/2021/EPAandLDEQAnnounceStoryMapResource.pdf).

## **Firestone Polymers Agreed to Settle Multiple Environmental Claims at its Sulphur, La., Rubber Manufacturing Plant**

The Department of Justice (DOJ), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and LDEQ announced Firestone Polymers, LLC (Firestone) agreed to resolve alleged violations of the Clean Air Act and several other federal and state environmental laws at the company’s synthetic rubber manufacturing facility in Sulphur, Louisiana. The company will also pay a total of \$3.35 million in civil penalties.

The settlement requires several actions from Firestone, including meeting emissions limits, operating and maintenance requirements, equipment controls, limiting hazardous air pollutants from facility dryers, conducting inspections of heat exchangers, installing controls and monitors on covered flares and installing flaring instrumentation and monitoring systems.

After being notified of the violations but prior to the consent decree being lodged, Firestone took other compliance measures, including installing and operating a regenerative thermal oxidizer system to receive waste gases from dryers, reducing n-hexane solvent concentrations, and inspecting and testing heat exchangers. Learn more at [www.deq.louisiana.gov/assets/docs/News\\_Releases/2021/EPAFirestonePressRelease.pdf](http://www.deq.louisiana.gov/assets/docs/News_Releases/2021/EPAFirestonePressRelease.pdf).

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## **EPA announced Water Infrastructure Funding for Louisiana through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, calls for prioritizing underserved communities**

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Michael S. Regan announced funding that states, Tribes, and territories will receive in 2022 through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. This funding, provided through EPA's State Revolving Fund (SRF) programs, will create jobs while upgrading America's aging water infrastructure and addressing key challenges like lead in drinking water and per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) contamination.

Louisiana will receive \$101,243,000. Learn more at

[www.deq.louisiana.gov/assets/docs/News\\_Releases/2021/EPAAnnouncesWaterInfrastructureFundingforStates.pdf](http://www.deq.louisiana.gov/assets/docs/News_Releases/2021/EPAAnnouncesWaterInfrastructureFundingforStates.pdf).

## **LDEQ's EnviroSchool held multiple webinars**

The EnviroSchool program at the LDEQ is the environmental education outreach arm of the Agency that provides training for communities, businesses and other organizations on a number of regulatory topics. The goal of this program is for the attendees to better understand the environmental regulatory process and to maintain and improve environmental compliance.

These workshops are free and open to the public. The program hosted webinars on sewer system reports and stormwater management plans, understanding nonpoint source pollution, understanding water permitting, cleaning Louisiana's air - understanding air quality standards, understanding public participation, LDEQ's New Vision 2021— an evolving approach to the TMDL Program, World of Waste, LDEQ's Air Emissions Inventory and other air emissions data and understanding asbestos and lead.

If you missed them, you can visit our EnviroLibrary to view past presentations from EnviroSchool sessions, or visit LDEQ's YouTube page to view EnviroSchool webinar recordings and educational videos on various environmental regulatory topics.

## **LDEQ's Emergency and Radiological Services Division's Radiation Section passed Nuclear Regulatory Commission audit**

The Emergency and Radiological Services Division's (ERSD) Radiation Section passed a Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) audit of LDEQ's Radiation Program with flying colors. The NRC performed a comprehensive Integrated Materials Performance Evaluation Program (IMPEP) review of the Radiation Section between November 2020 and January 2021.

An IMPEP team, led by the NRC, conducted the review remotely due to travel restrictions associated with COVID-19, with the exception of in-person LDEQ inspector inspection accompaniments. The NRC IMPEP team reviewed all aspects of LDEQ'S Radiation Program, compared the program to standard performance indicators and found that LDEQ's Radiation Program met or exceeded those performance standards.

## **LDEQ continued response to COVID-19 epidemic**

LDEQ continues to issue several Emergency Declarations and Amendments in response to the public health emergency response. LDEQ also provided tips on proper safety protocols to the public and adjusted business operations and personnel staffing accordingly so that little to no disruption in service to the state was seen. LDEQ accomplished several public hearings in a safe manner in accordance with COVID-19 regulations and concerns.





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## Message from the Secretary

***Chuck Carr Brown, Ph.D.***



*Dr. Chuck Carr Brown*

We have nearly reached the end of 2021, and I doubt many people are sad about that. In 2021, we had a major hurricane, Ida, on the heels of Hurricane Laura in 2020. In 2021, we began to see the Delta variant become the dominant strain of COVID-19 after the original virus rampaged through the state in 2020. It's been a rough year following a rough year. Our agency has persevered through it all. We do have some good things to look back on.

In the last two years, LDEQ has improved and expanded its community air monitoring capability. In addition to the 36-site LDEQ statewide ambient air monitoring system, the agency has a mobile air monitoring ability with two Mobile Air Monitoring Laboratories (MAMLs), which can be deployed to potential sources immediately. LDEQ also has three temporary located monitors (TLM) that can be stationed in specific problem areas for 6-12 months. TLM equipment can sample a full array of air quality parameters that allow agency scientists to identify emissions issues, craft solutions and track progress toward the resolution of problems. LDEQ received national recognition in January 2021 for its achievement in EPA's Clean Air Excellence Awards in the Community Action category for our Temporary Located Community Air Monitor Program.

We have also expanded our unmanned aircraft (drone) program to include pilots in four of our six regional offices, with pilots in training in the other two. The unmanned aircraft will soon have air sampling capabilities.

We are better equipped to keep track of what is in the air in Louisiana, and all of LDEQ's air monitoring results can be delivered in real-time via the agency website.

LDEQ partners with EPA to provide funds to rehabilitate properties that have been taken out of commerce because of residual pollution at such sites, called Brownfields. LDEQ's Brownfields Program partners Federal, State and local resources to facilitate the reuse of Brownfields sites throughout Louisiana. In 2021, LDEQ Brownfields projects included Small Community Technical Assistance Grants, a Community-Wide Assessment Grant in Algiers, funding for Risk Evaluation/Corrective Action Program and Voluntary Remediation Program classes, technical assistance for over 20 Brownfield sites statewide, and completion of the cleanup of the Sun Furniture Site in Shreveport (which is slated to be a mixed-use transportation hub).

The state of Louisiana continues to be in attainment for the air pollutant ozone. In fact, except for two small areas in two parishes that are not in attainment for the sulfur dioxide standard, the state is in attainment for all six of EPA's National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). The result is that Louisiana residents are breathing the cleanest air in the state in decades.

The agency has developed a protocol for responding to odor issues in areas where there are ongoing disagreements between facilities and residents of nearby neighborhoods. The agency has continued to respond to emergencies from releases, spills, storms, floods, fires and natural disasters like hurricanes. The agency has a detailed guidebook that directs the cleanup and disposal of storm debris after hurricanes and major floods.

As we move into 2022, LDEQ is working with EPA to incorporate policy that will allow LDEQ to apply environmental justice guidance in our decision-making process.

No one at our agency is naive. We know 2022 will bring challenges. We are approaching the upcoming year with confidence, though. We have been through hard times and have been tested. We will handle whatever comes our way, even as we hope for a quieter, more temperate year.



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## Louisiana's air quality continued to improve during 2021

Louisiana's air quality continues to improve. The entire state of Louisiana is in attainment for ozone and fine particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) for the year of 2021. The state was able to maintain the air quality gains made in preceding years. Currently, Louisiana is designated in attainment for the 2015 Ozone NAAQS.

The air has continued to improve largely because of cooperation between EPA, Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality, industry, business and individuals. It has been a statewide cooperative effort that has provided a quantifiable improvement. Reaching and maintaining attainment is a daunting task considering that the state includes a heavy industrial corridor, marine commerce activity on the Mississippi River, state government offices, two major universities, an airport and heavy interstate traffic through the center of the urban area.

It has required state, federal, local, business and individual effort to achieve these results. The continuing downward trend indicates significant progress given the emissions challenges.

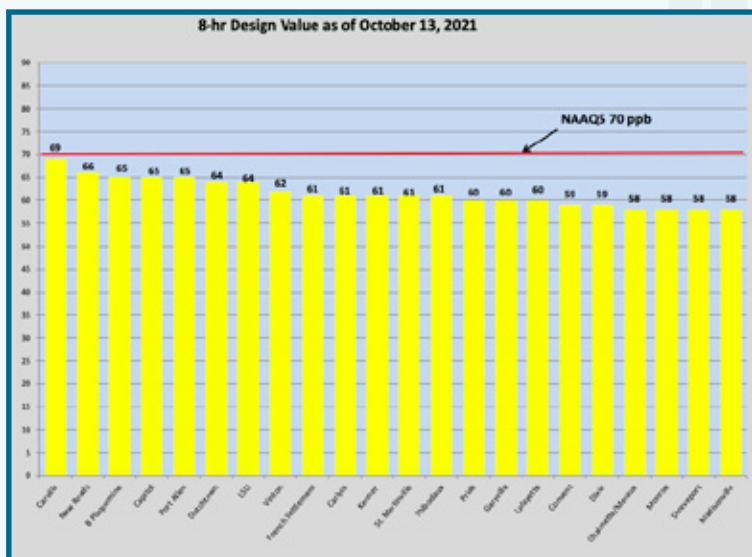
During ozone season, May through October, Louisiana experienced eight days that exceeded the Orange standard on the Air Quality Index. These readings could have been influenced by smoke from other areas of the country.

Louisiana is also in attainment for Fine Particulate Matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>), and the department is taking steps to be sure it stays that way. The only areas in nonattainment are in St. Bernard Parish and a small portion of Evangeline Parish for SO<sub>2</sub>.

For current information on air quality, go to <https://airquality.deq.louisiana.gov>.

You can sign up for notification on ozone, PM<sub>2.5</sub> and/or Sulfur Dioxide request notifications at the above address.

For more Air Quality (AQ) information, you can log in to [www.airnow.gov](http://www.airnow.gov). If you want to get AQ notifications and know daily AQ you can subscribe to EnviroFlash, the free air quality notification system provided by LDEQ and EPA at [www.deq.louisiana.gov/page/enviroflash](http://www.deq.louisiana.gov/page/enviroflash).



LDEQ employed the Mobile Air Monitoring units several times during the year to enhance capability and identify pollutants. In 2021, they were deployed as follows:

**Black Water Terminal, New Orleans**  
March 10-12, 2021

**2R Construction, Shreveport**  
May 9 – 12, 2021

**Hurricane Ida, Chalmette, Marrero and Norco**  
September 2 – 12, 2021

**Saint Gabriel**  
December 7 – 10, 2021

More missions will be carried out in 2022



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## LDEQ's Criminal Investigation Section investigates, enforces environmental laws

LDEQ's core mission is to protect human health and the environment, and the agency's Criminal Investigations Section (CIS) is the law enforcement arm tasked with bringing anyone committing an environmentally illegal activity to justice. To launch investigations across all 64 parishes, the section continually works in tandem with local, parish, state and federal law enforcement partners, including the various districts attorney to investigate, and, in many cases, prosecute environmental crimes.

For a state that's known as the Sportsman's Paradise, and prides itself on its natural beauty and unique environmental aesthetic from the Mississippi River and the Atchafalaya Basin, to the Kisatchie National Forest and Toledo Bend down to the Gulf of Mexico, a majority of environmental violations involve illegal dumping.

Waste tire dumping is a very common occurrence, with many citizens not realizing that most parishes will accept and recycle a certain number of waste tires each week, free of charge.

Solid waste dumping, chemical waste dumping and dumping motor oil are violations CIS commonly investigates. Discharging hazardous chemicals into the soil or waters of the state is illegal and an ongoing struggle that law-abiding citizens in the state continue to deal with.

While deterrence and prosecution are certainly important, the ultimate priority is to clean up the environment as soon as possible so that the area can be returned to its natural, intended use.

During FY20, CIS undertook 21 investigations that resulted in cleanups by the responsible party.

Many cases have been the work of hidden mobile cameras that take the place of the old fashioned "police stakeout" scenario that involves additional manpower and a host of logistical issues that can easily compromise a criminal investigation. Cameras are ever-present, constantly advancing in technological scope, offer real-time data and may be concealed in a variety of locations.

"Deployable camera technology has improved over the years, which makes cameras an affordable resource for monitoring habitual dump sites. Cameras are a force-multiplier when used to combat illegal disposal," LDEQ Attorney Mike Daniels said. "During FY20, CIS deployed camera technology that assisted in identifying 13 responsible parties for the illegal disposal of solid waste."

Once an illegal activity is discovered, CIS launches an investigation in order to determine the responsible party so that a cleanup can be performed without involving taxpayer funding. Aggressive prosecution is always sought, and CIS works closely with its legal and law enforcement partners across the state to push for the maximum allowable penalty that can be adjudicated upon those responsible. Criminal prosecution efforts undertaken by CIS over the years have resulted in criminal fines, probation and jail time.

"Any act of illegal dumping or illegal discharge is done to circumvent environmental laws to the detriment of our human health and our soil, air and water," LDEQ Secretary Dr. Chuck Carr Brown said. "Individuals and businesses who make the decision to break environmental laws are blatantly putting your health and your family's health at risk, while striving to destroy our ecosystems – destruction that will be seen today and in future generations if we don't work together to stop it."

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Ultimately, however, the objective is not only to bring violators to justice, it's to initiate a cleanup as soon as possible in any instance where illegal dumping or activities have occurred. It's imperative that cleanups be undertaken immediately so that any potential or realized environmental damage is stopped and no further harm to the water, soil and/or air takes place.

Environmentally related crimes are extensive, even involving administrative violations such as self-proclaimed professional engineers or surveyors who misrepresent their credentials on official documentation. Companies or individuals have also attempted to file false public records with LDEQ as well as public and private entities.

One investigation of note during this fiscal year involved theft from a program that received federal funding:

In June 2021, former Asbestos Contractor Marc A. Victoriano, 46, of Covington, was sentenced for theft of federal program funds by U.S. District Court Judge Lance Africk. Victoriano was sentenced to five years of probation with eight months of home confinement, including an order to pay a mandatory \$100 special assessment fee and \$212,618.00 in restitution to the victim, Terrebonne Parish School Board.

According to court records, from 2015 to 2017, Victoriano and his company, Professional Safety Consultants, LLC, provided asbestos inspections for the Terrebonne Parish School Board as mandated by the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA). Victoriano submitted 56 invoices to the school board with fraudulent asbestos laboratory reports, air monitoring reports and asbestos testing reports. In addition, he submitted nine invoices to the school board for AHERA reports that contained forged signatures and accreditation information.

The school board paid Victoriano approximately \$212,618.26 to which he was not entitled, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 666(a)(1)(A).

"Financial Crime is a despicable felony that impacts many citizens," U.S. Attorney Duane A. Evans said. "However, this scheme to defraud Terrebonne Parish Schools, that placed students and staff in a potentially dangerous situation and financially victimized taxpayers, exponentially aggravated this crime. Our office commits to continue our local, state and federal partnerships to seek justice for our community, especially our most vulnerable populations."



*These acts of illegal dumping of household materials, furniture and waste tires in East Baton Rouge Parish were caught on camera by CIS during FY 20. Through these surveillance methods, all suspects were arrested and charged through the 19th Judicial District Court.*

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“The defendant was responsible for the safe and legal removal of material containing asbestos,” said Special Agent in Charge Christopher Brooks of EPA’s criminal enforcement program in Louisiana. “The defendant knowingly ignored regulations on the safe management of asbestos, putting workers, the general public, and most alarmingly school children, at risk. This resulted in the Terrebonne Parish (Louisiana) School Board being defrauded out of \$212,618.”

The investigation was a collaborative effort between the EPA’s Criminal Investigation Division, LDEQ’s Criminal Investigation Section, Louisiana State Police and the Louisiana Environmental Crimes Task Force.

When safely possible, LDEQ asks that citizens keep an eye out for any illegal dumping or disposal, chemical spills or releases, odors, open burning of household materials, wastewater dumping, fish kills, waste tire burning or dumping and incidents that could pose a threat to human health and the environment. These incidents should be carefully photographed and documented, if safely possible, and reported immediately to local law enforcement and LDEQ through the SPOC hotline at 1-888-763-5424, or online through the incident report form at [www.deq.louisiana.gov/page/file-a-complaint-report-an-incident](http://www.deq.louisiana.gov/page/file-a-complaint-report-an-incident).

Together, everyone can be an active watchdog in their community and their state by keeping an eye out for environmental violations that adversely affect your health and impact your air, water and soil.

## Regional Offices address Louisiana’s environmental needs

The Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) maintains a regional office in each of Louisiana’s most populated areas, serving every corner of the state’s 64 parishes, including the headquarters office in downtown Baton Rouge.

Six regional offices and two substations are tasked with a variety of functions and address the state’s environmental protection needs on a daily basis.

Office duties include permit support assistance as well as environmental assessment (air, water, remediation and underground storage tanks) and environmental compliance (enforcement, surveillance and emergency response) functions.

Environmental scientists based in the regional offices wear many hats as they may be called out to investigate a solid waste, air or water discharge incident on a given day. They must also be well-versed in conducting initial investigations on emergency response calls, including illegal dumping, open burning and assisting with criminal investigations.

A regional office is located in each of Louisiana’s six major metropolitan areas, supported by two substations: Pineville (outside Alexandria) and Bayou Lafourche in Lockport.

**Acadiana Regional Office – 111 New Center Drive, Lafayette, LA 70508 (337) 262-5584**

**Parishes served: Acadia, Avoyelles, Catahoula, Concordia, Evangeline, Grant, Iberia, Lafayette, LaSalle, Rapides, St. Landry, St. Martin, St. Mary, Vermillion**

Serving a majority of “Cajun Country,” the Acadiana Regional Office generally covers the region south of Alexandria and between Lake Charles and Baton Rouge.



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There are 42 environmental scientists and support staff at the office. Most inquiries they address pertain to illegal dumping/waste discharges, open burning, discharges into state waters and facility flaring/smoke issues. The office also inspects two air monitoring stations periodically.

Due to its proximity to the Gulf and several waterways, seven boats and two canoes are maintained on-site.

The Acadiana and Southwest Regional Offices have conducted more than 3,650 landfill and emergency debris site assessments in response to Hurricanes Laura, Delta, and Zeta -- in addition to maintaining and meeting their normal inspection/work activity load. During FY-21, the office addressed more than 872 complaint calls, incidents and spills.



Capital Regional Office

**Capital Regional Office – 602 North 5th St., Baton Rouge, LA 70802 (225) 219-3600**  
**Parishes served: Ascension, Assumption, East Baton Rouge, East Feliciana, Iberville, Livingston, Pointe Coupee, St. Helena, St. James, St. Martin, Tangipahoa, West Baton Rouge, West Feliciana**

Just a few blocks from the State Capitol Building, the Capital Regional Office is located in the Galvez Building in downtown Baton Rouge.

This office covers the environmental protection needs of 13 surrounding parishes, and the office employs 24 environmental scientists and office staff. The staff covers various media such as air, water quality and solid/hazardous waste inspections. The Capital Regional Office also manages a warehouse in nearby Port Allen that houses a lab and the department's equipment, including boats, the Incident Command unit and all-terrain vehicles.

The Capital Region primarily conducts investigations to determine compliance with applicable regulations, as well as inquiries from the public relating to illegal dumping, burning, asbestos, lead and untreated wastewater discharges. In addition, the regional staff is tasked with responding to and managing environmental issues due to natural disasters.

During the state fiscal year, the office has addressed more than 1,000 environmentally-related incidents, spills and complaint calls.

**Northeast Regional Office – 508 Downing Pines Rd., West Monroe, LA 71292 (318) 362-5439**

**Parishes served: Caldwell, East Carroll, Franklin, Jackson, Lincoln, Madison, Morehouse, Ouachita, Richland, Tensas, Union, West Carroll, Winn**

The Northeast Regional Office is located just off of Interstate 20 in West Monroe. The office has 20 employees, whose primary duties include air, waste and water inspections, along with radiological and underground storage tank inspections. An air monitoring station is also under the office's inspection rotation. The office maintains three boats for access to the Ouachita River and surrounding waterways.



Northeast Regional Office

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# DISCOVER DEQ

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The office primarily handles calls regarding illegal water or waste discharges, illegal spills and open burning. Over the past fiscal year, the office has addressed more than 389 complaint calls, spills and environmentally-related incidents.



*Northwest Regional Office*

**Northwest Regional Office – 1525 Fairfield, Room 520, Shreveport, LA 71101 (318) 676-7476**

**Parishes served: Bienville, Bossier, Caddo, Claiborne, De Soto, Natchitoches, Red River, Sabine, Webster**

Located in downtown Shreveport, the Northwest Regional Office serves the northwest corner of the state and the ArkLaTex region bordering Arkansas and Texas.

Currently, the office has 23 employees, including a criminal investigator and an emergency responder. The majority of the staff comprises environmental scientists in the department's Surveillance Division, who primarily address air, water and waste inspections, plus any complaints or inquiries from the public. Calls usually pertain to illegal waste or chemical discharges, open burning and facility upsets such as flaring or emissions.

Two boats are housed on-site, and the office has addressed nearly 600 complaint calls, environmentally related incidents and spills during the fiscal year.

**Southeast Regional Office – 201 Evans Road, Bldg. 4, Ste 420, New Orleans, LA 70123 (504) 736-7701**

**Parishes served: Jefferson, Lafourche, Orleans, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, St. John the Baptist, St. Charles, St. Tammany, Terrebonne, Washington**

Located near the Huey P. Long Bridge on the east bank of the Mississippi River, the Southeast Regional Office serves Greater New Orleans and the surrounding areas.

The office has 54 environmental scientists and support staff and is the department's largest regional office in terms of personnel. The office staff comprises scientists in the Surveillance Division, tasked with air quality, solid/hazardous waste and water quality inspections in the region. Other responsibilities include radiation protection, environmental assessments, emergency response functions, underground storage tanks and remediation, along with business/community outreach and enforcement.

The office also oversees the Bayou Lafourche substation in Lockport, with several boats ready to address environmental protection operations requiring water access.

Common calls received pertain to illegal dumping and illegal wastewater discharges, open burning, odor complaints and facility emissions. The office's ambient air group staff also oversee air quality inspections at various ambient air monitoring sites.

The office addressed 1,867 incidents during the fiscal year.



*Southeast Regional Office*

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*Southwest Regional Office*

**Southwest Regional Office – 1301 Gadwall St., Lake Charles, LA 70615 (337) 491-2667**

**Parishes served: Allen, Beauregard, Calcasieu, Cameron, Jefferson Davis, Vernon**

SWRO is a few miles south of Interstate 10, heading west about 40 miles from the Texas-Louisiana border. Serving the southwestern part of the state, the office has 26 environmental scientists and support staff.

Typical calls addressed include facility flaring and smoke inquiries along the Westlake industrial corridor, open burning and illegal waste discharges. The staff is also tasked with conducting inspections at air monitoring stations that measure for various constituents such as ozone, volatile organic compounds, particulate matter and sulfur dioxide. During the fiscal year, hurricanes damaged the office and impacted operations. LDEQ's Acadiana Regional Office assisted with the workload and continues to provide support for the

office, helping with water quality monitoring activities, incident investigations and scheduled inspections.

Due to their proximity to several lakes, including Calcasieu Lake and the Gulf of Mexico, the staff maintains three boats along with a canoe. During FY-21, the office has addressed more than 750 complaint calls, environmentally related incidents and chemical spills.

**Kisatchie Central Regional Office – 2800 MacArthur Drive, Suite A, Alexandria, LA 71301 (318) 487-5656**

Supporting the Northwest Regional Office as a substation as well as a stand-alone entity, the office serves central Louisiana and supports LDEQ's northern regional offices as needs require.

Along with the usual variety of citizen calls, the office primarily addresses inquiries and notices related to open burning, illegal dumping and illegal waste discharges.

With ten employees in the office, many employees wear many hats and are cross-trained in addressing air, water and waste issues. The substation also maintains an attorney and a small business assistance representative who supports both the substation and the Northwest Regional Office. The station maintains four boats that may be used when water insertion is needed to better address water quality issues that may arise along the Red River or one of the many lakes, bayous and waterways surrounding the Alexandria-Pineville area.

During the fiscal year, the office has addressed more than 312 complaint calls, spills and incidents.

**Bayou Lafourche Regional Office – 125 Barataria St., Lockport, LA 70374 (985) 532-6206**

Serving in support of the Southeast Regional Office as a substation while simultaneously operating on its own, the office is located along Bayou Lafourche in Lockport. Due to their proximity to the Gulf Coast and Mississippi River, the office keeps four boats at the ready.



*Kisatchie Central Regional Office*

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# DISCOVER DEQ

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*Bayou Lafourche Regional Office*

As the smallest operating office within LDEQ, the staff of nine is frequently called upon to address an array of issues. As such, each employee is multi-faceted and capable of wearing many hats – trained and experienced in handling several environmental areas of concern.

Much like the other offices, their duties predominantly tend to focus on wastewater inspections, open burning calls, illegal dumping, underground storage tank inspections and air monitoring/sampling. Frequent calls are related to illegal waste discharges into surrounding bayous as well as illegal open burning calls.

The office has addressed more than 422 complaint calls, spills and incidents during the fiscal year.

### **Bayou Lafourche office and Kisatchie Central offices move**

As technology advances and priorities shift over time, new offices are sometimes necessary in order to keep up to speed. Over the last FY, this certainly held true in LDEQ's case, as two of the department's substations relocated to more adequate office spaces.

In January 2020, the department's Bayou Lafourche office (a satellite location under the Southeast Regional Office in New Orleans) relocated across the street to a larger, more secure facility. Later that year, in December, LDEQ's Kisatchie Central Office in Pineville (a satellite office under the Acadiana Regional Office in Lafayette) moved a few miles west to a building housing newly built office spaces in Alexandria.

Both moves have positioned those offices in more visible, user-friendly locations where the needs of the citizens in those respective regions can be better served. The relocations also offer a host of additional benefits, marking moves from older buildings to newer buildings that provide newer and larger office spaces, enhanced technology, ample public and official parking, public accessibility and overall security.

### **Bayou Lafourche Regional Office**

Built in the early 1900s, the two-story building at 110 Barataria St., a stone's throw from Bayou Lafourche itself, was once home to a soda fountain, a dental office and a pharmacy before LDEQ arrived and set up shop 13 years ago. In recent years, however, the Bayou Lafourche staff's mission began to outgrow the building, so a more accommodating location from which to conduct business was sought.

In late 2019, the office chanced upon a vacancy that was a few steps across the street. A single-story, 5,000 square foot building at 125 Barataria St. was available, offering more office space and improved working conditions. Recognizing the overall value of this location, the department signed a five-year lease with a five-year renewal option and moved into the space in January 2020.

Formerly the site was a bank before it changed ownership and became a substation for Entergy. The new office includes modern conveniences such as central heating and air and updated electrical wiring. More important is the office provides an expansive, more visible location from which the office can conduct operations. Exterior features include ample public parking and a security fence that encircles a paved lot in the rear of the building. Covered bays for the staging of department boats and vehicles are housed safely inside the security fence, where they were previously unsecured at the old location.

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# DISCOVER DEQ

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While wastewater treatment inspections and watershed surveys comprise the bulk of the office's day-to-day duties, the rural location and semi-autonomous nature of the Bayou Lafourche office means that everyone is called upon to address a variety of issues. On any day, an environmental scientist may respond to an open burning complaint, investigate an illegal dumpsite, conduct a water quality inspection, assist with an emergency response call or even help with air monitoring.



*A series of covered parking bays allow the office to maintain boats in a secure location.*

For environmental issues that are more technical or require additional manpower, the seven-member team will be supported by the 50-plus staff of the Southeast Regional Office based in New Orleans. "The Southeast Regional Office also assists the Bayou Lafourche staff with inspections, training and water quality issues," Brian Tusa, Southeast Regional Office Manager, noted.

The biggest benefit of the move is the logistical advantages that a suitable, secure facility provides. This is particularly important during significant events such as hurricanes and storms. The office's proximity to the Gulf of Mexico and its associated tributaries dictate a heightened need for readiness. "The larger facilities at this new location will allow us to quickly and adequately set up a Unified Command," Tusa said.

As the department's southernmost office, Bayou Lafourche personnel are often the frontline team tasked to deal with any number of natural and man-made issues that occur off of Louisiana's coast. As many of those investigations require access by boat, everyone on staff is licensed to operate any of the four boats that the office maintains – including a Carolina Skiff, two Boston Whalers and a 25' Parker Boat.

The Bayou Lafourche staff is enjoying the new location and its expanded capabilities. "The staff is pleased to be operating from this new office space, and its accommodations better allow us to accomplish our tasks in the Lafourche, Terrebonne, St. John and lower Jefferson Parish regions," said Stephen Lorio, Environmental Scientist Supervisor at the Bayou Lafourche office.

Lorio also highlighted the strategic advantages of being close to the Gulf. "Our location here logistically makes sense, as we have immediate access to highways 1 and 308, as well as highway 90 to New Orleans and Houma." "There's plenty of work here, so having an office in Bayou Lafourche is a big time-saver, shortening the department's response time to address issues and complaints," Tusa added.

### Kisatchie Central Regional Office

The office's former location, staffed by the department since 1987, occupied a two-story brick building near the entrance of the campus of the Central Louisiana State Hospital in Pineville. The staff and its ever-increasing mission began to outgrow the building through out the years. They needed an updated, more viable base of operations from which to conduct the department's environmental protection responsibilities. As the building began to show signs of age and deterioration, the department began seeking an updated, more visible location.

Located approximately seven miles west of the old location, the approximate 4,000 square foot office space is situated on the side of a building predominantly occupied by Unitech Training Academy off of South MacArthur Drive and Baldwin Avenue in south Alexandria. Other tenants include a Probation and Parole office, Easter Seals and the Social Security Administration. An unoccupied warehouse is also part of the building.

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Once the site of a Super K-Mart automotive center that closed in 2000, the new office changed hands over the years before a local real estate property management firm. Seeking to move from the Pineville location, LDEQ staff worked closely with a local realtor to select the site. In late 2020, new walls, cabinets, workspaces, plumbing, electrical and telephone lines were installed in fairly short order. The department is leasing the space for a five-year contract, with an additional five-year renewal option.

With secured door access to the office's two entrances by keypunch, the site offers larger workspaces, a new water sampling laboratory, a large conference room, separate bathrooms, a warehouse for staging the office's three boats and ample public parking – all improvements not offered at the previous location.

"We now have enhanced Wi-Fi and Internet connectivity, plus a command room which is ideal for standing up an incident command quickly in order to address hurricanes and emergency response events," Rhonda McCormick, Acadiana Regional Office Manager, said. "There's also an automatic connection to Wi-Fi for state-owned laptops, which makes communication much easier," added Jimbo Earles, Environmental Scientist Supervisor with the Kisatchie Central Regional Office.

The move from a fairly rural area in Pineville to a busy thoroughfare in Alexandria is a benefit to the department, as it brings noticeability and easier access for the general public. Earles elaborated on that point, noting that having an office centrally located in the state allows citizens to meet with and better communicate with the department. Its location in Alexandria also adds to the strategic capabilities for the department, as it's within a two-hour drive from most other regional offices, and the nearby airstrip allows for fast access by plane by LDEQ staff, when necessary.

The Kisatchie office operates under the oversight of the Acadiana Regional Office and has a varied staff. The staff comprises personnel from surveillance, emergency response, underground storage tanks/remediation, radiation and legal. Due to its central location, Kisatchie is predominantly tasked with addressing environmentally related incidents and inquiries in the surrounding parishes of Rapides, Avoyelles, Grant, LaSalle, Catahoula and Concordia. The Acadiana office also serves those parishes, in addition to St. Mary, Iberia, Vermilion, St. Martin, Evangeline, Acadia, Lafayette and St. Landry. Both offices support each other, however, and exchange personnel and resources given the scope of the environmental issue addressed.

"There is a lot of crossover staffing between both offices, especially for compliance inspections. Everyone works together to address environmental concerns and to serve the needs of the entire region," Earles said.



*The space includes an equipment staging warehouse and a water sampling lab.*





## LDEQ is proud to support the local charitable campaigns during the holiday season



*Karyn Andrews, LDEQ Undersecretary, presents with Janet Pace, Vice President of Development and Philanthropy for the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank, with a check for \$2,073.25 (equivalent of 6,220 meals).*

Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality's (LDEQ) giving season begins well before December! LDEQ kicked off the Louisiana State Combined Charitable Campaign (LA SCCC) in August and continued fundraising efforts through Oct. 15. The LA SCCC campaign efforts were immediately followed with a fundraiser for the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank beginning on Nov. 1.

This year marks the eighth year LDEQ has participated in LA SCCC. The campaign is the only state-approved charitable activity that enables payroll-deducted gifts from employees of state agencies. This program allows LDEQ employees to designate an ongoing or one-time contribution to their choice of up to four health and human service charities participating in the LA SCCC. Sixty-two charities are participating in 2021, all of which provide much needed health and human services throughout the state.

Annually, all health and human service non-profit agencies registered in good standing with the state are eligible to apply to be a part of this campaign. If the charity of your choice was not included, please note

that it is up to the discretion of the charity to apply annually, or they may not meet all requirements. In an effort to raise funds at LDEQ, employees were offered the one-time donation opportunity, the ongoing pledge opportunity, casual dress days for purchase, cash donation opportunities, and snacks and soda for sale in the DEQ Snack Shack. Thank you to everyone who has donated and participated in LDEQ's fundraising efforts. LDEQ collectively donated \$5,196 for 2021.

LDEQ employees have also been giving to the fundraiser benefiting the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank (GBRFB), which will conclude on Dec. 30. According to the food bank, there is more food insecurity in our communities than ever before. That's easy to understand when an area is weathering a global health pandemic and has just survived another vicious hurricane season. Since November, LDEQ has raised money and collected donations via DEQ's "Snack Shack" sales, "Gratitude is the Best Attitude" sales, individual contributions, and a "Fill-A-Plate" food drive that benefited the Food Bank. Thanks to the "Fill-A-Plate" food drive efforts, which ended on Nov. 16, LDEQ employees donated 2,069 pounds of food equating to 1,724 meals.



## EBR Household Hazardous Materials Day held Dec. 4

The line couldn't have been longer if they were giving away free chicken. Some 899 cars were served during the East Baton Rouge Parish Household Hazardous Materials Collection Day (HHMCD) 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 4, at the LSU Touchdown Village Parking lot. East Baton Rouge Parish residents brought household hazardous materials and leftover paint, and volunteers collected household hazardous waste from residents.

LDEQ has been a partner, along with other partners and sponsors, in the HHMD since its inception in 1990 and provides volunteers to staff the paint swap, to rescue usable latex paint and to keep it out of the landfills. Volunteers open, sort and mix the leftover paint in five-gallon containers. After the volunteers collect, screen and blend the paints, it goes to the Habitat for Humanity ReStore to sell to the public at a reduced price.

This year 29 volunteers, from LDEQ, LSU and Exxon rescued 75 five-gallon buckets of paint and sent it on its way to be re-used, not dumped in a landfill. Over the years, thousands of gallons of paint have been recycled and disposed of properly because of environmentally aware citizens and the volunteers that assist each year.

The collection day is a collaborative effort between the Baton Rouge City parish and other partners. For more information about recycling, paint disposal and common potentially hazardous materials in the home, go to [www.brla.gov/890/Recycling-Office](http://www.brla.gov/890/Recycling-Office) or the LDEQ recycling pages at [www.deq.louisiana.gov/page/recycling](http://www.deq.louisiana.gov/page/recycling).



*Volunteers rescued 75 five-gallon buckets of paint.*





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## LDEQ On The Move

### Lourdes Iturralde's Retirement party



*Environmental Compliance Assistant Secretary Lourdes Iturralde visits with attendees at her retirement party Dec. 15 in the Oliver Pollock Room on the first floor of the Galvez Building. Iturralde worked at LDEQ 25 years.*



*SERO Regional Manager Brian Tusa, center, chats with LDEQ Disaster Coordinator Daniel Lambert, right.*



*The event was a time for old and new friends to visit and enjoy some good food while saying goodbye to a beloved member of the executive staff.*



*Jay Pecot, husband of Lourdes Iturralde, shares a conversation with Russell Clark who worked under Iturralde in the Emergency and Radiological Services Division.*



## Who's Who At LDEQ?



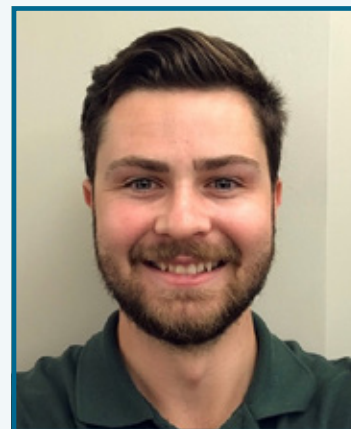
**Peter Cazeaux – Environmental Scientist Manager, Air Planning and Assessment Division, Office of Environmental Assessment**

Cazeaux earned a Bachelor of Science degree in wildlife and fisheries in 1997 from LSU. He has been involved in the LDEQ Air Monitoring Program for the past 24 years.

Cazeaux enjoys fishing, outdoors, LSU football/baseball and playing the tenor saxophone.

**Kyle Gordon – Environmental Scientist, Office of Environmental Compliance, Capital Regional Office**

Gordon graduated from Louisiana Tech University and Southeastern Louisiana University. He was recently promoted to Environmental Scientist 4 with the Office of Environmental Compliance in the Capital Regional Office.





# **DISCOVER** DEQ

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## Louisiana Department Of Environmental Quality's 3rd Quarter Summaries

### Third Quarter 2021 Enforcement Actions:

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

### Third Quarter 2021 Settlement Agreements:

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

### Third Quarter 2021 Air Permits:

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

### Third Quarter 2021 Water Permits:

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

### Third Quarter 2021 Solid and Hazardous Waste Permits:

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

