

# What's Inside?

LDEQ Secretary Brown named vice president of ECOS

Message from the Secretary

Gulf of Mexico Hypoxic Zone (Dead Zone) slightly smaller than expected

LDEQ's YouTube channel offers information on pro-environmental topics

LDEQ staff from the Southeast Regional Office receives training in First Aid/CPR

Keep Louisiana Beautiful conference to be held Oct. 11-12 in Baton Rouge

Louisiana Rural Water Association Annual Conference held in Lake Charles

Fall Household Hazardous Materials Collection Days scheduled in four parishes

Who's Who At LDEQ?

#### **CONNECT WITH LDEQ**



# LDEQ Secretary Brown named vice president of ECOS

n June 1, LDEQ Secretary Dr. Chuck Carr Brown broke new ground when he became the vice president of the Environmental Council of the States (ECOS).

"It was when Ben Grumbles left. He was the president, and he left (that office) to become executive director. Maya (Reece) became president, and I moved up officially," Brown said.

Each year, the previous ECOS vice president rotates into the president's role and the secretary-treasurer rotates to the vice president position. That process sped up with Grumble's decision to move to the paid position of executive director after he left

state service. Each executive committee member shuffled into the next higher office. A longtime ECOS member, Brown previously served as secretary-treasurer and was chair of the organization's Solid Waste Committee. Brown was elected to the secretary-treasurer post in September 2021.

Brown is the first African-American elected to the organization's executive committee in its 28-year history.

The new position offers new challenges, Brown said. "One of the major changes is (serving) as co-chair of the e-enterprise leadership council that is comprised of EPA, the states and the tribes. I will be representing the states. Janet McCabe, who is the EPA Assistant Administrator. will represent EPA. The tribes are in the middle of determining who is going to lead their effort. So that's a major change.



ECOS Secretary-Treasurer Dr. Chuck Carr Brown awaits resumption of panel presentations during a break at the ECOS Spring Meeting in Asheville, N.C., in April. Brown is now the Vice President of ECOS.

"And when we have these meetings (ECOS), my presence is enhanced because I will be leading lots of panel discussions and substituting for the president when she is not available," Brown said. ECOS has a full membership meeting twice a year, he said, and a states-only meeting in summer.

Brown said ECOS provides information and services to its members and is a key resource for information on new and changing EPA policies. ECOS recently offered



a white paper on perfluorooctane sulfonic acid – PFOS, a group of omnipresent contaminants that are often present in food packaging, furniture, cookware, clothing, carpet and a thousand other products including water and some fish. Some of the PFOS and PFOA compounds are believed to be harmful to human health. EPA is still working to determine just how harmful the compounds are. But environmental regulators are acting proactively, Brown said.

"There is a PFOS memo that came as a roadmap from EPA. They basically want to research, restrict and remediate. That is the three things they want to do with PFOS. They issued interim limits that are extremely low for drinking water. Several states have already established their own limits," Brown said. "In Louisiana we are, of course, using the 70 parts per trillion as our limit. No public drinking water systems in Louisiana were above that."

ECOS may issue policy papers in the near future, Brown added, citing the pollutant ethylene oxide as a likely subject.

Joining Brown on the new ECOS Executive Committee is President Myra Reece, South Carolina Director of Environmental Affairs. And in July, Reece announced that Liesl Eichler Clark, Director of the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, & Energy, had been elected by ECOS members to serve as secretary-treasurer. Reece also announced her appointment of former President Todd Parfitt, Director of the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality, as past president.

Reece also announced the appointment of Jim Macy, Director of the Nebraska Department of Environment & Energy and a past ECOS president, to serve as Co-Chair of the ECOS Environmental Justice Workgroup. Macy will work closely with current Co-Chair Serena McIlwain, Undersecretary for Environmental Protection of the California Environmental Protection Agency.

A native of Amite, Brown has served as secretary of LDEQ since 2016, when he was appointed to the position by newly elected Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards. He previously worked at LDEQ in the mid-2000s, serving as assistant secretary for environmental services.

Brown possesses a B.S. in chemistry from the University of Southern Mississippi. He holds a Master of Public Administration from Southern University A&M College and a Doctorate of Philosophy in Public Policy/Environmental Policy from the Nelson Mandela School of Public Policy and Urban Affairs at Southern University A&M College.

The Environmental Council of the States (ECOS) is the national nonprofit, nonpartisan association of state and territorial environmental agency leaders. The purpose of ECOS is to improve the capability of state environmental agencies and their leaders to protect and improve human health and the environment of the United States of America.

ECOS was established in December 1993 at a meeting of approximately 20 states in Phoenix, Ariz. A 501(c)(6) organization, ECOS relies on dues from its members as well as federal and private sources of funding.

ECOS's core belief is that State government agencies are the keys to delivering environmental protection afforded by both Federal and State law. Further, ECOS provides leadership on environmental issues of national importance and plays a critical role in facilitating a quality relationship among and between Federal and State agencies.



## Message from the Secretary Chuck Carr Brown, Ph.D.

On Aug. 16, a steamy Louisiana morning, a large group of officials, dignitaries and press representatives sat on hay bales as they rode trailers pulled by farm tractors slowly moving across fields and lanes at the LSU Burden Museum & Gardens off Essen Lane. They were headed to a woodland glade where a press event marked the announcement of the final report of the Governor's Litter Abatement Task Force.

Burden Center was chosen to host the event because it is the site of an 80-ton raft of litter that has collected in a 10-acre borrow pit that was created when Interstate 10 was constructed. Ward Creek flows through the beautiful 440-acre Burden property – a place you'd never imagine deep in the heart of an urban area. At least not until you walked back to the creek and saw the immense accumulation of cans and bottles, paper and packages, plastic cups, plastic foam products -- every manner of litter and garbage, even waste tires. Earlier in the year, Gov. John Bel Edwards held a press conference at the edge of the borrow pit to draw attention to what is a statewide problem: litter.



Dr. Chuck Carr Brown speaks at the Aug. 16 Governor's Litter Abatement Task Force press conference. From left, Kelly Hurtado of the Louisiana Stormwater Coalition, Col. Chad Hebert of the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Col. Lamar Davis of the Louisiana State Police, Baton Rouge Mayor Sharon Broome, Lt. Gov. Billy Nungesser and Gov. John Bel Edwards.

Since that earlier event, about a fourth of the garbage raft has been removed by hand. The change is breathtaking, and it was made possible by funding from EPA,

LDEQ and the Lieutenant Governor's Office. Standing at a podium erected among the sweetgum, hickory, hackberry, ironwood and many other tree species, Gov. John Bel Edwards reminded everyone that litter is a serious issue and when it comes to solving the problem, "We all have a role to play."

I couldn't agree more. When it was my turn at the podium, I pointed out that littering is a learned behavior, and we have to learn how to stop littering. The you-throw-it-down, I-pick-it-up method doesn't work. People have to quit throwing litter down.

Through grants, EPA provided \$303,460, LDEQ provided \$400,000 (through the State Revolving Fund) and the Lieutenant Governor's Office provided \$75,000 for a demonstration project at Capitol Lakes and at Burden Museum & Gardens. The projects will test tools and techniques for litter removal and, even more important, prevention of litter accumulation. We have equipment to intercept litter in waterways before it reaches a more remote spot and is deposited in an unsightly pile. It's not 100 percent effective, but it can greatly reduce the amount of litter that makes it into the environment.

That's something we need to do. It helps. But think how great it would be if we didn't have to spend all that time and effort and money to pick up litter. Think how great it would be if no one threw down cigarette butts or gum wrappers or paper bags. What if everyone treated Louisiana like it is their own home? They should.

#### Because it is.

#### Core value

One-by-one, I have covered the agency's core values over the past few months. This month brings the final core value: "We will be fair in all of our dealings with the public, industry and persons inside and outside the agency."

On the surface, this seems easy. It's not always easy to define "fair," however. When you have mutually exclusive requests from competing interested parties, you have to make a choice. One of them is going to feel you are unfair every time. By "fair" we mean exercising your best objective judgment informed by the best technical data available. Adhere to the rules and regulations. Approach every problem without bias. Get varied input. All stakeholders deserve a level playing field and respectful treatment. Do all that, and you will be fair to all.

#### Keep an eye on the forecast

This is the most threatening time of the year. It's not just hurricanes and tropical storms that are a worry in late August and early September, it's a time when there is much energy in an unsettled atmosphere. That can lead to sudden, heavy rains. Look at Dallas earlier this month. Look at Jackson, Miss. Look at Carlsbad, N.M. A monsoon system can drop inches of rain in hours, flooding neighborhoods. Be particularly careful of flooded streets. The water can be deeper than it looks. Turn around, don't drown.

Stay safe and watch out for each other.



# Gulf of Mexico Hypoxic Zone (Dead Zone) slightly smaller than expected

n July 25, the R/V Pelican, 116-foot flagship of the Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium (LUMCON) left port. Carrying scientists from LSU and LUMCON it began its shelf wide journey in Louisiana coastal waters west of the Mississippi River to map the Gulf of Mexico Hypoxic "Dead" Zone for 2022. It was estimated to be 3,275 square miles, which is the 8th smallest in 36 years of data, according to LUMCON, or approximately the size of New Jersey. The area mapped is much smaller than the predicted area of approximately 15,200 square kilometers. The hypoxia area in the Gulf is the second largest in the world.

#### What is a "Dead Zone?"

Dead zones are hypoxic areas in the world's oceans and large lakes or an area of low oxygen. Hypoxia occurs when dissolved oxygen concentration falls to or below 2 milligrams of  $O_2$ /liter. When a body of water experiences hypoxic conditions, aquatic flora and fauna begin to change behavior in order to reach sections of water with higher oxygen levels. Few organisms can survive in hypoxic conditions.

#### What causes hypoxia?

Formation of hypoxia in the Gulf could be caused by:

- 1. Freshwater discharge and nutrient loading of the Mississippi River
- 2. Nutrient-enhanced primary production or eutrophication
- 3. Decomposition of biomass by bacteria on the ocean floor
- 4. Depletion of oxygen due to stratification

The Mississippi River basin drains approximately 41% of the land area of the conterminous United States, ranging as far west as Idaho, north to Canada, and east into New York State.

#### What can be done to improve or eradicate the "Dead Zone?"

LDEQ works with the Hypoxia Task Force to reduce the "dead zone." This August, the updated report on the size of the Hypoxic Zone (commonly known as the "Dead Zone") in the Gulf of Mexico was produced through the combined efforts of LDEQ, Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium (LUMCON), LSU and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

"Dead Zones" are low-oxygen, or hypoxic, areas in the world's oceans and lakes. The northern Gulf of Mexico Hypoxic Zone adjacent to the Mississippi River is the largest hypoxic zone currently affecting the United States, and the second-largest hypoxic zone worldwide, according to the National Geographic Society, and there are 415 dead zones around the world. Hypoxia, or low oxygen, is an environmental phenomenon where the concentration of dissolved oxygen in the water column

Continued on page 5



Result of 2022 shelf wide cruise July 25 to Aug. 1 to map the Gulf Hypoxic Zone on the R/V Pelican, conducted by Louisiana State University and Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium





2nd Mapping instruments being lowered into the Gulf on the mapping shelf wide cruise

decreases to a level that can no longer support living aquatic organisms. When there are excessive amounts of nitrogen and phosphorus in the water, algae can bloom to harmful levels. Dead zones form when the algae die, sink to the bottom and are decomposed by bacteria — a process that strips dissolved oxygen from the surrounding water.

Harmful algal blooms, dead zones, and fish kills are the results of a process called eutrophication — which occurs when the environment becomes enriched with nutrients, increasing the amount of plant and algae growth to estuaries and coastal waters. The Hypoxia Task Force was established in 1997 to understand the causes and effects of eutrophication in the Gulf of Mexico. It helps coordinate activities to reduce the size of the dead zone. It is made up of federal agency members and representatives from the 12 member states: Louisiana, Kentucky, Iowa, Arkansas, Illinois. Indiana, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, Wisconsin, Tennessee and Mississippi – all states that contribute in some way to the nutrients in the Mississippi that flow to the Gulf of Mexico.

The recently passed InfraStructure Bill has allocated funds to the 12 Task Force states to be used over a 5-year period to effect long-term changes in nutrient flow and other factors affecting the Gulf.

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) includes a Gulf Hypoxia Program (GHP) funded at \$12 million per year for five years (\$60 million in total) for actions within the 12 Hypoxia Task Force states to support the HTF Gulf Action Plan. This amounts to about \$4.1 million over five years for Louisiana, anticipated to be funded from FY2022 through 2026.

Amanda Vincent, manager in the Water Planning and Assessment Division said "with these funds Louisiana will be able to implement key strategic actions from our Louisiana Nutrient Reduction and Management Strategy." EPA indicates that the BIL GHP provides for dedicated, sustained funding for implementing the Gulf Hypoxia Action Plan through supporting states in implementation of their nutrient strategies.



## LDEQ's YouTube channel offers information on pro-environmental topics

urious about nonpoint source pollution, keeping your neighborhood storm drain free of debris, how to properly separate storm debris or how to maintain your home sewage treatment system? Maybe you would like an overview on asbestos, landfills or how the small business assistance program works?

LDEQ's YouTube channel has videos on those topics and much more, including tips on how to navigate the EDMS to search for public records, and the negative impacts that open burning can have on the environment.

LDEQ's Communications Section partners with subject matter experts at LDEQ to produce videos on various topics in order to inform the public on areas that the department frequently deals with.

Videos also include information on hand-held air monitoring equipment, the unmanned air systems program, the clean water revolving loan fund, the waste tire process and how the Mobile Air Monitoring Lab (MAML) works, among others topics.

LDEQ's YouTube channel has several videos on various environmentally-related topics

Additionally, LDEQ has produced several videos on an array of subjects that have been presented in the department's Enviroschool classes.

Enviroschool is both a virtual/online and in-person series of educational sessions held periodically on various areas that fall under the department's purview. Sessions include workshops on hazardous waste, brownfields, recycling, landfills, water monitoring programs (such as New Vision), the public participation process, the permitting process, and classes on the department's various air, water and waste endeavors.

To learn please visit the YouTube channel by more. searching for "Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality," www.youtube.com/ on this link: or click LouisianaDepartmentofEnvironmentalQuality



LDEQ's YouTube channel has several videos on various environmentally-related topics.

Click on the topics below to view the corresponding video: *Open Burning Maintaining Storm Drains Debris Separation Home Sewage Treatment Maintenance Air Quality Awareness Recycling Used Electronics Navigating EDMS Pollution Prevention Landfills Nonpoint Source Pollution Enviroschool: Water Quality overview* 



# LDEQ staff from the Southeast Regional Office receives training in First Aid/CPR



Environmental Scientists Victoria Brignac (I) and Tyler Williams practicing bandaging during the First Aid portion of the class.

eriodically, LDEQ holds classes on first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and use of the AED (Automated External Defibrillator). During the year, the courses are held at regional offices across the state. They are open to all LDEQ employees, and the agency encourages personnel to take one or more of the courses.

The American Heart Association (AHA) course provides hands-on instruction about how to administer CPR and basic first aid to adults, children and infants. Instructors are volunteers from LDEQ who are trained and certified as instructors under the AHA guidelines. LDEQ's CPR and first aid classes are small, with eight to 10 participants to allow for more focused, individualized instruction.

"The skills taught during the training provide employees with current information on how they may assist in an emergency or a minor accident," said Dionne Magness, CPR/First Aid Instructor and Environmental Scientist Supervisor at the Southeast Regional Office in New Orleans. "Certified instructors provide lessons ranging from how to deal with a bee sting to chemical burns to heart attacks and more. Students are tested on their first aid skills and must demonstrate the ability to provide quality chest compressions during CPR. Upon successfully passing the skills test, participants are certified through the AHA. Certifications are valid for two years



Environmental Scientist Joe Carruth practices CPR on both adult and infant "manikins."



## Keep Louisiana Beautiful conference to be held Oct. 11-12 in Baton Rouge

he Keep Louisiana Beautiful State Conference is being held Tuesday and Wednesday, Oct. 11-12, at the Hilton Baton Rouge Capitol Center, 201 Lafayette St. in Baton Rouge.

Open to the general public, the conference is an annual educational training and networking forum focusing on learning about proven practices and innovative programs designed to achieve a cleaner, greener and more resilient Louisiana.

This year's conference will cover topics related to the eight recommendations made by the Governor's 2022 Task Force on Statewide Litter Abatement and Beautification.

The conference will conclude with the Everyday Hero Awards luncheon featuring Gov. John Bel Edwards, and will recognize those who go the extra mile to keep Louisiana litter-free and beautiful.

Everyone is welcome to attend. See the full conference schedule, the roster of speakers, and register to attend here: *keeplouisianabeautiful.org* 



REGISTER AT KEEPLOUISIANABEAUTIFUL.ORG



# Louisiana Rural Water Association Annual Conference held in Lake Charles

he Louisiana Rural Water Association held its 36th Annual Training and Technical Conference in at the Lake Charles Civic Center July 18-21. The Conference offered exhibitors, speakers and 32hour certification review classes for training in wastewater and water and 24-hour technical sessions of credit in both water and wastewater.

The 32-hour classes are for certification review and participants can take the exam at the end of the course to obtain certification. They can then apply for a license required by the State Board of Health. This license is good as long as they pay the fee and take the required number of continuing education hours. Every wastewater system is required to have at least one person with a license. The 24-hour technical classes are required to get the continuing education and updates needed to maintain a license. The technical classes are also taken for members of the government, such a mayor and council members, and anyone who wants to know more information about their wastewater treatment system.



Pat Credeur, LRWA Executive Director, presents Linda Piper with the Appreciation Award for LDEQ

LDEQ exhibited at the conference and two employees gave presentations. Sharron Crayton, environmental scientist senior in the Office of Environmental Compliance spoke about LDEQ Regulatory Compliance Issues After the Storm and LDEQ Inspection Finding and In-House Solutions. Kathy Huddle, environmental scientist supervisor in the Office of Environmental Compliance, spoke on Untangling the Web-NetDMR Tips, Tricks and FAQs.

LDEQ received an LRWA Appreciation Award accepted by Linda Piper, environmental scientist manager in the Office of the Secretary.



(Left to Right) Linda Piper, Pat Credeur, LRWA Executive Director, Sharron Crayton, Jesse Means, Ella Barbe, Marissa Jimenez, Faith Stephens, Perry Fontenot



(Left to Right) Sharron Crayton, Jesse Means, Linda Piper, Perry Fontenot, and Marissa Jimenez work at the LDEQ booth.



# Fall Household Hazardous Materials Collection Days scheduled in four parishes

ast Baton Rouge Parish will hold the Fall Household Hazardous Materials Collection Day (HHMCD) 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 1.

EBR Parish residents can drop off their household hazardous materials at HHMD at LSU's Touchdown Village, located at South Quad Drive. Residents can enter and exit from South Quad Drive only and should remain in their vehicles at all times while workers collect their materials.

Only East Baton Rouge Parish residents presenting valid identification are eligible to participate. Commercial waste will not be accepted. For more information visit *brla.gov/recycle*.

Ascension Parish residents can drop off their household hazardous materials at Lamar Dixon Expo Center in Gonzales 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 1.

Ascension Parish residents only. You must have a valid I.D. For more information please go to *www. ascensionparish.net*.

On Saturday, Oct 29, West Baton Rouge Parish will hold their Household Hazardous Materials Collection Day at Alexander Park in Brusly from 8 a.m. to noon.

On Saturday, Nov. 5, St. Tammany Parish will hold its fall HHMCD. More details will be forthcoming.

For more information, including a complete list of items accepted at the event, visit *brla.gov/recycle* or contact the City-Parish Recycling Office at (225) 389-5194.





# Who's Who At LDEQ?



# Karen Xu – Environmental Chemical Specialist Staff, Water Planning and Assessment Division, Office of Environmental Assessment

Xu earned a Ph.D. in chemical engineering from a top ten university in China, and had a few postdoctoral research experiences in the chemical engineering area at Louisiana State University and University of Notre Dame. Xi published numerous papers in peer-reviewed high impact journals and earned a first place poster award at an international conference. She began at LDEQ in April 2015 in the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) group for water quality modeling and assessment.

Xu worked for the first alternative restoration plan in the new vision report in the TMDL group. She is familiar with assessment, analysis and modeling approaches for the fecal coliform or dissolved oxygen impairment in watersheds, as well as water permit support. She was recently promoted to Environmental Chemical Specialist Staff in Water Planning and Assessment Division.

#### Katie Jorden – Environmental Scientist Supervisor, Surveillance Division, Office of Environmental Compliance, Southwest Regional Office

Jorden is a native of Lake Arthur who received her master's degree from McNeese State University in environmental and chemical science. She has been with the department for five years and was recently promoted to supervisor of the surveillance division in the Southwest Regional Office.







William Felicien – Environmental Scientist Supervisor, Air Planning and Assessment Division, Office of Environmental Assessment

{Felicien graduated from high school in Castries Saint Lucia in the Caribbean and studied agriculture in Guyana. He then worked as an agricultural officer before moving to Baton Rouge to attend LSU where he earned a bachelor's degree and Master of Science degree.

He joined LDEQ in September 2014 as an environmental scientist in air field services, assigned to the Mobile Air Monitoring Lab (MAML) after working for six years as a research associate at LSU's Ag Chemistry Laboratory. When not working, he is probably jogging, playing soccer or enjoying nature.

## **Retiring from LDEQ**

Edwin Akujobi, Environmental Scientist Manager Jeffrey Dauzat, Administrator, Emergency Response and Radiological Services Jackie Marve, Attorney Mona Miller, Environmental Project Specialist 3 Daniel Odem, Environmental Scientist Staff Brenda Rankins, Accountant 3

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## Louisiana Department Of Environmental Quality's Second Quarter Summaries

Second Quarter 2022 Enforcement Actions: http://deq.louisiana.gov/page/enforcement-actions

Second Quarter 2022 Settlement Agreements: http://deq.louisiana.gov/page/enforcement-division

Second Quarter 2022 Air Permits: http://deq.louisiana.gov/page/permits-issued-by-calendar-quarter

> Second Quarter 2022 Water Permits: http://deq.louisiana.gov/page/lpdes

Second Quarter 2022 Solid and Hazardous Waste Permits: http://deq.louisiana.gov/page/waste-permits