



# DISCOVER DEQ

LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY NEWSLETTER



March 2023 Issue Number: 134

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## LDEQ launches monthly podcast to inform public

The Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) communications division has ventured into a brand new project by starting an official LDEQ monthly podcast. The podcast, appropriately named "LDEQ On Air", will feature one guest a month answering questions about their role at LDEQ. The goal of the podcast is to inform the public on how issues are worked through at LDEQ and the processes with which to solve those issues.

"I had the idea of starting the podcast because it's a form of media that allows the public to hear our side of the story when there's a controversial issue and get the facts straight from the people dealing with the issue," said Greg Langley, LDEQ Press Secretary. "The guests we'll feature are experts in permitting, enforcement and assessment. The public may not understand why certain things are done or the processes. We hope to explain it in a way people can understand."



Our first episode will feature Secretary of LDEQ Dr. Chuck Carr Brown as he discusses his transition out of his position and his favorite achievements during his 7-year tenure at LDEQ.

The first podcast will be released on Thursday, March 30. After this month, the podcast will be released every third Thursday of the month. An easy way to remember that is that it's the day after the "Ask the Governor" radio show. We won't be accepting live questions, but we will accept email submissions with suggestions.

To listen, visit our webpage at [www.deq.louisiana.gov/podcast](http://www.deq.louisiana.gov/podcast). Our podcast is also available on **Apple Podcasts**, **Spotify** and **Podbean**.

If you have any questions or would like to submit question suggestions, please email the LDEQ Communications Section at [SECTCOMMUNICATIONS@la.gov](mailto:SECTCOMMUNICATIONS@la.gov).

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## Message from the Secretary

*Chuck Carr Brown, Ph.D.*

*Leaving is poignant, but we can be proud of what we achieved.*

It's never easy leaving a job you have loved and coworkers who have been nothing but the best, but it was time for me to go. I need a little break, and then I will decide what my next chapter in my life will be.

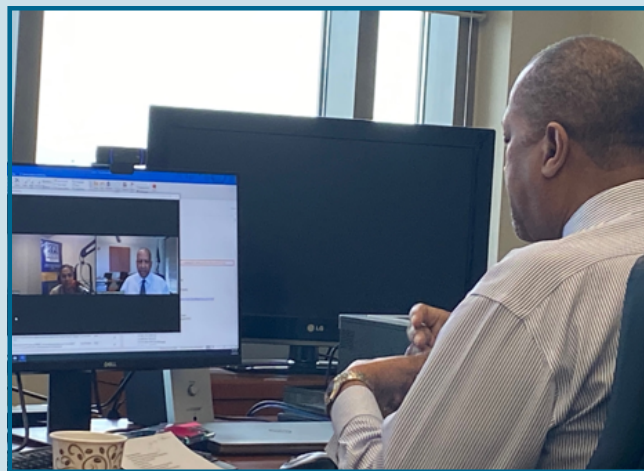
When I announced at the Louisiana Environmental Conference that March 31 was going to be my last day as secretary, the reaction was immediate. So many people came by that day to wish me good luck and say how much they will miss me. It was an emotional experience.

Since then, the attention hasn't stopped. I have been the subject of comments on radio, in the newspaper, on TV, Facebook posts, Twitter, everywhere. I never dreamed my departure would generate so much coverage, good and bad. That's all fine. The important thing to me is the agency and you, the employees of LDEQ. I hope you all had a good experience working with me. I want you to know you are the most professional and capable group of people I have ever been around. I am proud to say I worked with you.

You can take pride in what we all achieved together. We made great strides in improving air quality, water quality and remediating environmental contamination. We faced floods (2016 in Baton Rouge), fires (Cottonport was one of the worst), pestilence (COVID-19), storms (Laura and Ida were record setting hurricanes). We expanded our work from home capability. We learned how to use Zoom effectively for meetings and conference calls. We issued permits, held hearings, inspected facilities, conducted outreach, testified before the Legislature, went to countless meetings of councils, police juries, boards and commissions. We acquired new technology – MAMLs and unmanned aircraft – and those indelibly changed the way we do our jobs. Through it all, I reminded each and every one of our core values. Those values inform everything we do. I hope they continue to be the touchstone for how this agency operates going forward. So as a parting gift, I offer you the agency core values one more time:

- Make technically sound decisions rooted in science
- Conduct ourselves honestly and ethically
- Strive for continuous improvement
- Be accountable for our work
- Manage our resources effectively and efficiently to deliver value to the public
- Sustain our commitment to diversity
- We will be fair in all of our dealings with the public, industry and persons inside and outside the agency

Good luck to you all. I won't say goodbye. I know I'll be seeing you down the road, just not as secretary. Roger Gingles is that person now, and I believe he will do a fine job. But, one last time: Be careful out there. Look out for yourself and your coworkers.



*I was interviewed March 22 by Halle Parker of WWNO for Public Radio. Fittingly, it was a Zoom interview.*



## Dr. Chuck Carr Brown announces resignation at the Louisiana Environmental Conference

Attendees of the opening session of the Louisiana Environmental Conference were comfortably settled in, listening to Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) Secretary Dr. Chuck Carr Brown deliver an agency update when he dropped a bomb on them: “I am leaving. My last day in this job is March 31.”

And just like that, a normal yearly review became a news event.



*Dr. Chuck Carr Brown speaks at the Louisiana Environmental Conference.*

The secretary said he would be in Washington, D.C. for a meeting of the Environmental Council of the States through March 30, then return for a cameo appearance to “drop off the keys” on March 31. He said he was proud of the work the agency had done during his more than seven years as secretary, and was particularly proud of improvements in air and water quality.

Brown acknowledged he was leaving a few months early, but pointed out that his final term would end in January 2024 anyway. He said he plans to take some time off to relax and “maybe play some golf,” then decide on what his future career will be. He is not retiring, he said.

Brown’s announcement capped a well-attended speech in which he touted the staff of LDEQ and singled out the emergency response section as hard workers. “Those guys do a yeoman’s job,” he said, often responding to 80 or 90 calls in a month.

Brown said. The Office of Environmental Services (permits) and the Office of Environmental Compliance (enforcement) have their hands full. “The amount of industry in this state is immense,” he said. In 2022, he pointed out, the agency collected more than \$5 million in penalties.

Last year saw a repeat of some of the challenges that LDEQ sees on a regular basis. Brown mentioned odor complaints and waste tires. New challenges, he said, have come from the emphasis on climate change and carbon emissions reduction. Brown said recycling, renewable energy sources like wind, solar and hydrogen are now LDEQ interests. Each of those can generate opposition at the local level, he said.

Gov. John Bel Edwards announced March 16, the day of the Environmental Conference, that he had “reluctantly accepted” Brown’s resignation and had named Roger Gingles, LDEQ Assistant Secretary for Environmental Assessment, as LDEQ Interim Secretary.



## Secretary Brown updates jurors on LDEQ priorities



*Dr. Chuck Carr Brown addresses attendees at the Louisiana Police Jury Association Meeting in Shreveport March 9.*

“Every year since 1990, emissions have gone down,” Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality Secretary (LDEQ) Dr. Chuck Carr Brown told attendees at the Louisiana Police Jury Association Meeting in Shreveport March 9. “We are on the right track, and we are going to continue.”

Brown, who is a regular at the Association meetings, gave the group a rundown of what has been happening at LDEQ, including continuing success in improving air quality. Air quality, he said, relates to climate change. “Whether you believe in climate change or not,” Brown said, everyone can see that it’s snowing in California, record heat has taken hold in Louisiana in February and March and storms are on the rise everywhere.

“We can all do our part (to reduce carbon emissions),” Brown said. He pointed out that something as simple as reducing the use of plastic

grocery bags can help. Bringing your own sustainable bags to the market and carrying your groceries home in them can give you a great feeling, he said. “We need to be recycling bags and making them back into virgin plastic,” he said.

“We are the only Southern state to have a climate action plan,” Brown told the group. He showed a slide presentation with a pie chart of Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions. Industry is the source of 66% of GHG emissions in Louisiana, according to the chart. Brown said that eventually, limits on carbon emissions will be written into the permits of industrial facilities regulated by LDEQ. Until that can be done, he said, the agency will work to get industry to shift its fuel sources to clean and renewable fuels like solar, wind and hydrogen. Most GHG emissions occur during facilities’ energy consumption for operations, he said. Part of the counteraction will involve carbon capture and sequestration, he said.

The department continues to pursue its long-term goals of sewer system consolidation and subdivision solar power (one lot for each subdivision dedicated to a solar array). Other goals continue to challenge LDEQ’s employees, like the never ending proliferation of waste tires all across the state.

“They give birth on the side of the road,” Brown said of waste tires. He pointed out that once a waste tire pile is removed, it regenerates almost instantly. One solution the agency is pursuing is to grind up tires that don’t qualify for the LDEQ Waste Tire Program and put the shreds in landfills, he said. “That’s only tires for which no fee has been paid,” he said.



## 2023 Air Quality Awareness Week is May 1 through May 5

**A**ir Quality Awareness Week (AQAW) 2023 will be celebrated from May 1-5.

In 2023, EPA is partnering with National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), National Weather Service, National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), U.S. Forest Service, U.S. National Park Service, U.S. Department of Energy and U.S. Department of State, as well as State, Local and Tribal agencies to share information with the public about efforts to protect and improve air quality. The week also includes World Asthma Day on Tuesday, May 2.

While the air quality in Louisiana is the best it has ever been, there is always room for improvement. The theme of AQAW this year is, "Working Together for Clean Air." Air Quality Awareness Week is a chance to highlight resources, events information and involvement which helps increase air quality awareness. It is important to make air quality awareness a part of everyday life and decisions, and this week provides resources that help people take action to protect the environment every day. At the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) the public can sign up for air quality notifications, forecasts, real-time data and more at <https://airquality.deq.louisiana.gov>. Sign up for notifications when the air quality is getting poor by accessing [www.deq.louisiana.gov/page/enviroflash](http://www.deq.louisiana.gov/page/enviroflash) for the LDEQ/EPA free notification system.

This week is an opportunity for people to learn about what causes poor air quality and how to prepare for and respond to poor air quality not just during the month of May, but year-round.

The topics for AQAW 2023 are:

- **Monday, May 1 – Wildfires and Smoke**
- **Tuesday, May 2 – Asthma and Your Health**
- **Wednesday, May 3 – Air Quality and Transportation**
- **Thursday, May 4 – Air Quality and Climate**
- **Friday, May 5 – Participatory Science.**

Keep an eye out for events and information on AQAW.

## Commuter Krewe has solutions for your traffic problems



**C**ommuter Krewe can help if you would like a more convenient option to travel to work every day or are interested in saving gas and avoiding the daily wear and tear on your vehicle.

Commuter Krewe offers a free service to find other driving options. As a Krewe member, you can get help to find a carpool or vanpool ride based on your needs and availability. From telework to alternative work schedules to carpool, the Commuter Krewe team can assist or take the lead in developing solutions to suit your needs. The team and resources are all FREE to use. They can plan and implement on-site events including Rewards Programs, Try-It Days, employee onboarding and information sessions and Carpool/Vanpool matching. If an emergency occurs and you need a ride home, there is an Emergency Ride Home Program.

For more information on the program, visit [Commuterkrewe.la](http://Commuterkrewe.la) or call us at 225.344.RIDE to see what the Krewe can do for you!



## Louisiana Envirothon results in close competition for national event

Louisiana Envirothon's 17th consecutive competition was held March 1st at the LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens, and this year's event featured one of the strongest competitions ever seen in the contest. Three high school teams out of 13 participating scored high enough on their tests to qualify to represent Louisiana in the national Envirothon competition in New Brunswick, Canada, July 23 to July 29. There had never before been so many Louisiana teams to score so high in the history of the Louisiana Envirothon. All were vying for a single spot.

"I am so excited this year that all of our teams did really well -- including our first, second and third place teams all meeting the qualification to attend the NCF Envirothon this summer. However only one can go, so our first place team will prepare to represent Louisiana this summer in New Brunswick, Canada," said Tomeka Prioleau, Coordinator of Envirothon and LDEQ Business Analytics Specialist. "The current issue this year is Adapting to a Changing Climate, and because we are here in Louisiana, students have firsthand experience with this and could really dive into this topic and share their innovative ideas on how to live in this new and ever changing normal."

The 2023 Louisiana Envirothon, an environmental problem solving competition, was hosted by the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) in collaboration with other Louisiana organizations. The competition included testing in aquatics, forestry, soils and wildlife, as well as a current issue and an oral presentation. The 2023 current issue was Adapting to a Changing Climate. Envirothon teams consisted of five students who answer test questions about the subjects and present an oral presentation on the current issue. The Louisiana Envirothon is a part of the North American Envirothon, which includes 50 states, Canadian Provinces and China. Envirothon serves as the largest high school environmental educational competition in North America.

Each team prepared for months for the competition and it showed. The level of knowledge the students displayed about the different environmental subjects was impressive. The winning team will represent Louisiana proudly as they travel to Canada this summer.

Participating schools included Baton Rouge Magnet High School, Caddo Parish Magnet High School, Doyle High School, Kenner Discovery, Live Oak High School, Scotlandville Magnet High School and St. Anthony School.



First place: Baton Rouge Magnet High School Tree Huggers



Second place: Caddo Parish Magnet High School Hue Manatees



Third place: Baton Rouge Magnet High School Bulldogs Bites

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The 2023 Louisiana Envirothon winners:

**First place and highest score winners in Aquatics & Soils:** Baton Rouge Magnet High School Tree Huggers. The team members include Brandon Lin, Sarah Thomas, Andrew Z. Wang, James Xu and Louisa Zhu.

**Second place and highest score in Orals:** Caddo Parish Magnet High School Hue Manatees. Team Members include Anika Alla, Soren Cate, Marshall O'Callaghan, Mason Sater and Alston Zhang.

**Third place and highest score in Current Issues and Forestry:** Baton Rouge Magnet High School Bulldogs Bites. Team members are Keya Chandra-Rastogi, Emily Chen, Sameen Enam, Sebastian Schoegl and Bethel Weldegiorghis.

**Highest scores in Wildlife and Forestry:** Baton Rouge Magnet High School Darwin's Bulldogs. Team members include Ben Beauford, Payton Cooper, Kate Lee, Nuha Syed and Estrella Vazquez.

The major sponsor of Louisiana Envirothon is the LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens. Other sponsors include the Louisiana Environmental Health Association and the Louisiana Association of Conservation Districts. Louisiana Envirothon partnered with the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality, Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, LSU School of Plant, Environmental and Soil Sciences, Southern University Urban Forestry Program, LSU Superfund Research Center, Shreveport Aquarium and the Louisiana Environmental Education Commission to host the competition. For more information on Envirothon, please visit [www.deq.louisiana.gov/envirothon](http://www.deq.louisiana.gov/envirothon) or follow Louisiana Envirothon on Facebook, [www.facebook.com/Louisiana-Envirothon-143476735949](https://www.facebook.com/Louisiana-Envirothon-143476735949). If you are interested in sponsoring the team trip to Canada, please contact Louisiana Envirothon at [laenvirothon@gmail.com](mailto:laenvirothon@gmail.com).





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## It's not too late to participate in Love the Boot Week

It's not too late to be a part of Keep Louisiana Beautiful's Love the Boot Week -- the state's largest litter cleanup and beautification event, April 17-23. Volunteers will join this event throughout Louisiana as they work to end littering in our beautiful state. More than 300 cleanup events are registered in 57 parishes. You can be a part of it by registering an event or volunteering for one. Last year, during Love the Boot week, over 8,000 volunteers removed 293 tons of litter in 52 parishes. The goal this year is to double those numbers. To register an event for Love the Boot week or to volunteer, go to <https://keeplouisianabeautiful.org/love-the-boot>.

Employees of the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) at the Baton Rouge headquarters will hold their pickup April 19, and some LDEQ regional offices will be participating. We invite you to participate also.

There are things everyone can do on a daily basis to prevent and eradicate litter in our beautiful state. The "Let Louisiana Shine" campaign does this by conveying ways Louisiana residents can prevent litter such as:

1. Bag your trash, tie the bag tight and cover your bin to prevent trash from entering the environment and harming wildlife.
2. Keep a bag in your vehicle for garbage and dispose of your trash properly.
3. Check the bed of your truck to ensure it is free of trash and debris that could fly out and become litter.
4. When transporting large items, secure your load with tarps, nets, or tie-downs.
5. Whether you are hiking or boating, keep a bag with you for trash.

"This campaign is important to illustrate how litter hurts our wildlife, our environment, our neighborhoods, and our quality of life," KLB Executive Director Susan Russell said. "If we all work together to keep litter out of Louisiana, we can create a better place for our children and future generations to call home."

So whether you do it yourself or join the people who will be sponsoring or volunteering to Love the Boot, it's not too late to participate and Let Louisiana Shine.

The graphic is a blue vertical rectangle. At the top left is the 'Keep Louisiana Beautiful' logo. At the top right is the Louisiana state seal with the text 'STATE OF LOUISIANA' and 'LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR BILLY NUNGESSER'. The center features a white outline of Louisiana with the text 'LOVE THE BOOT week' in white and orange. Below this is the text 'KEEP LOUISIANA BEAUTIFUL' and a blue banner with 'APRIL 17-23, 2023'. Further down is 'SIGN UP TO CLEAN UP' and the website 'www.lovetheboot.org'. At the bottom are logos for 'LAMAR', 'THE Coca-Cola COMPANY', 'Louisiana' (with a state seal icon), and 'COX'.





## LDEQ On The Move



*Tomeka Prioleau, LDEQ Business Analytics Specialist, shows students the Enviroscape model at Park Forest Math and Science Night.*

### Park Forest Math and Science Night

LDEQ environmental scientist India Ambeau and Business Analytics Specialist Tomeka Prioleau participated in Park Forest Middle School's annual Family Math and Science Night Thursday, March 16. This event gives students the opportunity to participate in interactive exhibits featuring career and educational opportunities in math and science and community resources that support East Baton Rouge Parish youth and families. LDEQ tested students' knowledge of environmental concepts and used the Enviroscape model to show students the causes and sources of nonpoint source pollution.



*India Ambeau and Tomeka Prioleau demonstrate the Enviroscape, to explain nonpoint pollution to students at STEM Fest.*

### LDEQ participated in the Saint/Pelicans STEM Fest in Metairie

LDEQ participated in the Saints/Pelicans STEM Fest on Mar. 4 in Metairie. India Ambeau, Tomeka Prioleau, Marisssa Jimenez and Linda Piper took the Enviroscape model to show the students causes and sources of nonpoint source pollution and how it can be reduced.

The New Orleans Saints, New Orleans Pelicans and Chevron hosted STEM Fest 2023 where students participated in various Science, Technology, Engineering and Math activities. The event was held 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, March 4, at the Ochsner Sports Performance Center (Saints & Pelicans Practice Facility).



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## Dr. Chuck Carr Brown's Farewell Party

*March 23, 2023*





## Who's Who At LDEQ?



**Anna Daigle, Environmental Scientist, Office of Environmental Services, Waste Permits Division**

Daigle graduated from Louisiana State University in the fall of 2020 with a Bachelor of Science in geography and disaster science management. She joined LDEQ in November 2022 and is excited to learn and collaborate with her new colleagues.

**Kierra Smith, Human Resources Analyst, Office of Management and Finance**

Smith is a Baton Rouge Native who graduated as valedictorian from Mentorship STEAM Academy in 2014. Upon graduation, she enrolled at Southern University and A&M College, majoring in Business Management with a concentration in Human Resource Management. She has a Bachelor of Science in Management. In 2020, she began pursuing her Master of Business Administration in Human Resources from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette.

Smith began her work with the State of Louisiana as a human resources analyst in the Office of Management and Finance at the Department of Public Safety and Corrections before transferring to LDEQ. Kierra is the mother of a 2-year-old named Xayden Louis, she is the assistant dance coach at Helix Legal Academy Middle School downtown, and she enjoys reading, being outdoors, baking, traveling, live music, art and spending time with close family and friends. Her goals are to open a small recruiting and staffing firm, specializing in connecting HBCU graduates with Fortune 500 companies and firms.



**Amy Shultis, Environmental Scientist, Office of Environmental Compliance, Surveillance Division, Lockport Office**

Shultis is from Upstate New York, and moved down here in the fall 2020 after college. She studied biology and environmental sustainability at SUNY Oneonta in New York. Before joining LDEQ she worked for LUMCON, Forefront Emergency Management and Louisiana Oil Spill Coordinators Office.

Her hobbies include fishing, cuddling with her cat and playing Pickle ball. Shultis also enjoys boat rides and admiring the beautiful flora and fauna of Louisiana.



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

### Fourth Quarter 2022 Enforcement Actions:

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

### Fourth Quarter 2022 Settlement Agreements:

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

### Fourth Quarter 2022 Air Permits:

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

### Fourth Quarter 2022 Water Permits:

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

### Fourth Quarter 2022 Solid and Hazardous Waste Permits:

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

