

ADEM UPDATE

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ADEM Breaks Ground on New Office in Mobile



ADEM broke ground for the new Mobile field office in April

The Alabama Department of Environmental Management has broken ground on a new field office in Mobile. The new, state-of-the-art facility will be located on South Broad Street near Duval Street.

The proposed field office has been in the works for more than 10 years. The project is mostly funded by settlement money from the 2010 BP oil spill. The rest comes from funds approved by the Alabama Legislature.

In April, ADEM hosted a groundbreaking ceremony for the 15,000-square-foot building that will allow more efficient environmental protection services in the biodiverse-rich coastal area, and complement Mobile's redevelopment efforts in the area.

The new building will bring under one roof approximately 30 Departmental staff who have been working for years in old buildings that are more than nine miles apart and severely outdated.

At the ribbon cutting ceremony, ADEM Director Lance LeFleur said the project was a long time coming for the Department. He also said the new facility would greatly benefit ADEM, Mobile, and the entire coastal area.

"Very few places on Earth have the ecological riches of the Mobile Delta," said LeFleur. "ADEM will continue to play an important role in protecting these natural assets, and the new field office will enable our staff to have the modern resources it needs to carry out the Department's mission."

The site location for the new building is also a benefit for ADEM and the City of Mobile.

"We are pleased to be locating here and participating in Mobile's major redevelopment of Broad Street, which is the main link between the city and the important planned airport expansion," LeFleur said. "This contemporary facility will help make a favorable first impression for those flying into Mobile."

The \$11 million project is being funded by \$7.9 million approved by the Alabama Gulf Coast Recovery Council using settlement money from the 2010 BP oil spill, and an additional \$3 million approved earlier this year by the Alabama Legislature.

ADEM Conducts Water Quality Monitoring at Public Beaches

Water quality information for Alabama's Gulf Coast public beaches is available to help people make informed decisions about their recreational use of coastal waters this summer.

ADEM has initiated the enhanced summer monitoring associated with its 2022 Coastal Beach Monitoring Program, and resumed its weekly collection and analysis of water samples at 25 public beaches in Mobile and Baldwin counties.

The Department conducts water quality sampling and testing to establish overall water quality data from each public beach. The enhanced monitoring efforts will stretch through Labor Day with water samples being collected weekly - or more frequently if needed - at each of the public beach locations.

Beach selection and sampling frequency are determined using a risk-based evaluation and ranking process that considers the amount of beach use, the level of risk, and any specific factors associated with each location.

Sculpture Highlights Environmental Campaign

The Alabama Department of Environmental Management is working hard to educate the public to keep watersheds free of litter that threaten marine life and the environment.

ADEM has installed the first of several wildlife sculptures that are being placed at state welcome centers along interstate highways as part of the Department's "Help Keep Our Waters Clean" project. The first of eight such sculptures - a 10-foot-long loggerhead sea turtle - has been installed at the Grand Bay welcome center along Interstate 10 in Mobile County. More than 320,000 people visit the welcome center each year.

The metal sea turtle sculpture is filled with plastic bottles to raise anti-litter awareness and promote recycling. Plastic bottles are often found discarded along roadsides and other places as trash and end up washing into rivers, lakes, and streams.

ADEM's "Help Keep Our Waters Clean" project is utilizing the sculpture and signs along the interstates to inform motorists that they are entering a watershed and to encourage people not to litter. Another part includes the sculptures and signs placed at welcome centers to draw the people's attention by highlighting wildlife and conveying a message of reducing trash from entering waterbodies by increasing litter awareness.

The project is designed to engage everyone in the fight against litter through education and outreach. It is funded through a \$500,000 competitive grant awarded to ADEM by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The Alabama Department of Transportation and the Alabama Tourism Department have worked alongside ADEM to implement the project.

"This project educates participants about the importance of our rivers, streams and other bodies of water," said ADEM Director Lance LeFleur. "It creates opportunities for people to actually get involved in efforts to prevent litter and collect recyclable items such as plastic bottles."



Turtle sculpture at the Grand Bay welcome center in Mobile County

Recycling Challenge Increases Awareness

In an effort to raise awareness and provide an educational experience for the merits of recycling, the Alabama Department of Environmental Management invited several schools in various parts of the state to participate in the "2022 Recycling Challenge."

The event was designed to motivate students to do their part to increase recycling in Alabama. The program has three simple steps: sign up to earn cash for your school; challenge each student, teacher, and neighborhood to join your cause; and report on your success. This year, the Recycling Challenge was conducted at eight schools: Clark and Edgewood Elementary Schools in Selma; Elba High School and George Washington Carver High School in Tuskegee; Foley Elementary and Foley Middle Schools; Opp Middle School; and South Highlands Middle School in Bullock County.

More than 5,000 pounds of recycled materials was collected during the event, and the Department awarded a total of \$1,700 to the participating schools. Foley Elementary School had the largest amount of recycled materials (1,600 pounds) receiving \$400 for their efforts, and in a close second, Clark Elementary School in Selma also was awarded \$400 for collecting 1,580 pounds of materials



Students in Foley win Recycling Challenge

State Park Paved with Asphalt Made with Recycled Tires

The Alabama Department of Environmental Management and the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources have resurfaced roads and parking areas at Lake Guntersville State Park in a “win-win” for the park, environment, and taxpayers.

The repaving at the park using asphalt modified with rubber from recycled tires was paid for in part by an \$829,080 grant from ADEM to Alabama State Parks. The money comes from the state’s Scrap Tire Fund administered by ADEM. One dollar from the sale of each tire goes into the fund, which is used to remove scrap tires from illegal dumps, along roadsides and other places, as well as promoting used tire recycling. At a ribbon-cutting ceremony at Lake Guntersville State Park, ADEM Director Lance LeFleur said the paving is an ideal demonstration project.

“The best way to deal with old tires is to find an alternative beneficial use, thereby creating a market for them,” said LeFleur. “If scrap tires had more value, fewer of them would be dumped illegally and become environmental problems.”

The ADEM grant covered the costs of repaving access roads and parking areas for the park’s marina and lodge. In addition, ADCNR paid for the paving of additional roads in the park with the special asphalt, which is stronger, smoother, and will last longer than traditional paving options.

According to research by the University of Missouri and the U.S. Tire Manufacturers Association, asphalt made with ground-up tires has many advantages over regular asphalt. It lasts up to 50 percent longer and is less prone to potholes and cracking. Rubber-modified asphalt reduces tire wear, improves fuel mileage and is safer due to better traction. It is also easier to use, because it does not stick as much to machinery and hand tools.



Officials cut the ribbon at Guntersville State Park

Black Belt Homes to Receive Repair Assistance



UA’s SafeState program hosted stakeholders in Tuscaloosa

Federal, state, and local efforts are being made to remove environmental and safety hazards from some of Alabama’s most vulnerable and underserved communities. Recently, ADEM was invited to a kickoff event in Tuscaloosa, where stakeholders, state, and local leaders learned more about the Healthy Homes Production Grant program.

The program will target approximately 150 low-income homes in counties from the Black Belt region of the state. During the 42-month grant period, the program will identify and provide solutions for environmental hazards like indoor air quality, mold and moisture, carbon monoxide, lead-based paint, asbestos, radon, as well as general safety hazards like indoor and outdoor structural issues.

The meeting was held at the Hotel Capstone on the campus of the University of Alabama. The project is a group effort with ADEM lending technical support with the University’s SafeState Program and the Alabama Life Research Institute managing the \$2 million grant, and remediation activities along with the state health department. ADPH and the University of Alabama are establishing the application process for qualifying families. Once qualified, families will receive a no-cost assessment where inspectors from UA SafeState will evaluate potential hazards and coordinate the improvement of the home, prioritizing environmental and safety hazards.

ADEM UPDATE Available Online

The Alabama Department of Environmental Management publishes the *ADEM UPDATE* quarterly to inform Alabamians on the latest news and activities of the Department. As a cost-savings measure, the *ADEM UPDATE* is no longer printed. It is distributed electronically and available online through the publications link on the ADEM website at adem.alabama.gov. The ADEM website also has links to videos related to the Department's programs, public hearings, and recent events of interest.



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