

ADEM UPDATE

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Commission Renames Coastal Field Office

ADEM's new field office in Mobile has been named the "Lance R. LeFleur Coastal Alabama Field Office."

In February, the Alabama Environmental Management Commission voted unanimously to approve a resolution to change the name of the facility.

Gov. Kay Ivey's Deputy Chief of Staff, Brooks McClendon, attended the meeting at the ADEM Main Office in Montgomery. He read a letter from the governor expressing her gratitude to Director LeFleur for his dedication to Alabamians, the environment, and the construction of the state-of-the-art facility in Mobile, which officially opened a year ago.

Following the ceremony at the Commission meeting, Director LeFleur thanked Gov. Ivey, the Commission, and ADEM employees for the distinction of having the new facility named in his honor. In fact, he gave all of the credit to ADEM employees.

"Every place where it says 'Director LeFleur' on the new office, we need to replace that with 'the personnel at ADEM,' because they are the ones responsible for whatever good things that have happened in the last 15 years," said LeFleur.

The resolution from the Commission states that ADEM's new 15,000 square-foot office in Mobile is "emblematic of Director LeFleur's accomplishments at ADEM, enhancing efficiencies, modernizing systems, empowering ADEM staff, and protecting Alabama's environment." The Commission also noted that Director LeFleur has announced his intent to retire on May 1, "marking years of exceptional service to the citizens of the State of Alabama."

The Lance R. LeFleur Coastal Alabama Field Office is a first of its kind. It combines green infrastructure with numerous environmentally friendly features to help sustain Alabama's natural resources.

The facility has a parking lot that is paved with rubber-modified asphalt produced with recycled tires. "Rain Chains" are in place to take water from building's metal roof to underground cisterns for storage, and a retention pond on site helps to manage stormwater. A curved front façade on the building produces a changing effect as the sunlight and shadows move through the day, reflecting the dynamics of the hydrological cycle. The office also includes an electric vehicle charging station, LED lighting, and design functions to maximize natural light that contributes to efficiency.



L-R: Commission Chairman Frank McFadden, Director Lance LeFleur, and Brooks McClendon at the EMC meeting on Feb. 14 in Montgomery



The LeFleur Coastal Alabama Field Office in Mobile

ADEM Staff Participate in Optimist Club Career Fair



Students participate in hands on activities at the career fair

The Alabama Department of Environmental Management strives to reach students across the state and tell them of the exciting field of science, and to educate them on how ADEM helps to safeguard the environment. To better reach these students, the Department partners with local civic groups and schools to participate in special events like career fairs.

ADEM staff attended the Central Montgomery Optimist Club's 11th Annual "Dare to Dream" Career Fair at McKee Middle School. The ADEM employees took along an assortment of reading materials, preserved aquatic specimens, and magnifying devices to view these specimens.

ADEM staff provided stories about their passion for the field of science, as well as providing examples of the many different things ADEM scientists and engineers do in divisions of air, land, water, and field operations. One such example included the preserved aquatic samples, and how some scientists in ADEM's Field Operations Division collect and analyze these samples to determine the health of a water body.

Many of McKee's 8th grade students were in attendance as they will soon be moving up to high school. Their ideas for a career are beginning to take shape, and now the students will have a better understanding to see if they want to be a part of ADEM's mission to provide a safe, healthful, and productive environment.

Troy and Huntingdon Students Visit ADEM

The Alabama Department of Environmental Management works to educate college students across the state about the many career opportunities available, and to inform students of what courses would be especially helpful for jobs at ADEM.

Representatives from each ADEM division prepared slides to show to approximately 25 students, from Troy University and Huntingdon College who visited ADEM on February 7. Several ADEM staff members gave an overview of the Department, as well as a summaries of the various careers that are available.

The presentations were beneficial to the students who are beginning to look at possible internships and employment options in the near future. Students in core classes in various scientific and engineering fields are also interested in what ADEM has to offer, and in the benefits available to state employees.

The two-hour meeting between ADEM staff and the students provided an overview of each division that makes up ADEM, featured information on what a typical day looks like, and what positions ADEM likely needs to fill in the upcoming months and years. The presentations also were valuable to show students how to apply online, possible internship opportunities, and the many positives of working at an agency like ADEM, whose mission is to assure for all citizens a safe, healthful, and productive environment.



ADEM hosted students from Huntingdon and Troy in February

Dog Demonstration Project Underway

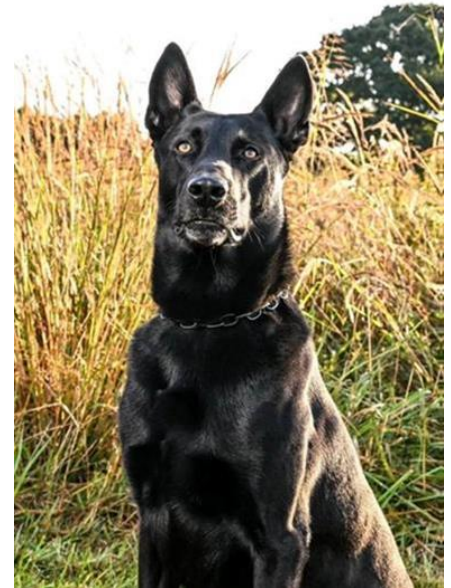
The Coastal Office laboratory at ADEM is collaborating with a handful of other agencies on a demonstration project to test whether dogs can be trained in Alabama to respond to the scent of human sources of wastewater.

If successful, the idea is to develop a program where trained dogs may be utilized to more rapidly pinpoint potential illicit sources of discharge (system leak failures caused by broken or clogged pipes, etc.) thus alleviating the typically time-consuming traditional field work associated with identifying potential contributing sources to high bacteria concentrations. Instant, on-the-ground, results could help regulated entities or ADEM decide where and when to sample.

The Department has entered this new undertaking along with the Mobile Bay National Estuary Program, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency - Gulf of Mexico Division, the City of Fairhope, Environmental Science Associates, Mobile County, the City of Mobile, the Dauphin Island Sea Lab, and the Alabama Department of Public Health, to test whether dogs can be trained to respond to the scent of septic sewage and municipal wastewater.

While canine scent tracking has been used since 1984 by the USDA to detect contaminants in fruit, meat, and vegetables, its use in microbial source tracking is relatively new. ADEM's Coastal Office laboratory provides the analytical data used to help "calibrate" *Professor X*, a Belgian Malinois with XanO Consulting, which has been in sewage wastewater scent response training for many months now. So far, *Professor X* has a 98-percent detection rate in training and hopes to achieve a similar accuracy rate during field deployment. This technology has the potential to be a significant cost and time-saving measure, adding to the toolbox of traditional source tracking methods.

The program is veteran-led. The Mobile Bay National Estuary staff has a military veteran who served in Iraq and Afghanistan as a military working dog handler, finding improvised explosive devices (bombs). The veteran staff member is repurposing skills learned on the battlefield and applying them to the wastewater detection canine program. This unique endeavor is being funded with contributions from the FDA, and with money from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to boost local economies and enhance environmental awareness. All participating agencies are donating time or in-kind contributions to the project.



"Professor X" is in training in Mobile

ADEM Managers Participate in Training at AUM



ADEM supervisors attend a training class at AUM

Equipping employees with the essentials they need to work efficiently and effectively is a priority at the Alabama Department of Environmental Management. In February, ADEM managers attended a refresher course to help them develop better strategies to create a more positive and engaged culture in the workplace. The training, entitled "Building Engagement and Team Morale," was conducted at the TechnaCenter in Montgomery by staff from Auburn University at Montgomery.

Two training sessions were held to accommodate various work schedules. Each class was a day-long event stretching from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. The sessions included power point presentations along with small and large group discussions to help ADEM managers learn the best practices for engaging

their staff, building teamwork, maintaining morale, and operating at peak efficiency.

AUM staff maintain that continuing education is important to strengthen communication and help boost employee engagement. Companies, groups, and state agencies that remain well-trained, produce better outcomes, connect more with colleagues, and maintain healthier work environments.

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 not 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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