

ADEM UPDATE

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ADEM Earns Praise for Perfect Property Audit

In November, the Alabama Department of Environmental Management received a letter from State Auditor Jim Ziegler congratulating the Department on receiving a perfect score after a review of a property audit.

The State Auditor's Office conducted a property audit in June of ADEM's non-consumable personal property, consisting of 3,215 items, valued at more than \$16 million. Only items \$500 or more were included in the comprehensive audit.

Ziegler visited ADEM's main office in Montgomery recently to congratulate the Department and personally recognize ADEM Director Lance LeFleur, Permits & Services Chief Russell Kelly, and Chief of General Services Brian Espy, on the perfect audit score and the diligent work that it took to earn this distinction.

"This year's audit was a real challenge due to the inaccessibility of equipment due to the COVID-19 restrictions," said Brian Espy. "Thanks to the hard work and cooperation of the ADEM staff, we were able to complete the audit successfully."

At the December meeting of the Alabama Environmental Management Commission, Director LeFleur informed the Commissioners of the audit, and highlighted the overall activities of the Permits & Services Division. ADEM also received a perfect score in 2019.



(L-R) Kelly, Ziegler, Espy, and LeFleur with audit recognition

ADEM Employee Achieves a First

One employee at the Alabama Department of Environmental Management has achieved a first.

ADEM's Dr. Prem Kumar, Ph.D., has been recognized by the American Academy of Environmental Engineers and Scientists as Alabama's first board certified environmental scientist in the specialty of environmental toxicology.

Kumar has worked as a senior environmental scientist for the last 12 years at ADEM in the Land Division's Environmental Services Branch - Assessment Section. He received the honor in August.

Kumar has more than 30 years of professional experience, including working as a Risk Assessor at ADEM, and 18 years of research, teaching and consulting in the environmental sciences. He has a multidisciplinary background in biological and chemical sciences that includes study and research in the fields of aquatic environmental biology, nutritional biochemistry, environmental toxicology, water and air pollution, environmental microbial biotechnology, and environmental



ADEM's Dr. Prem Kumar

molecular diagnostics. Dr. Kumar uses the best available scientific information and techniques in the development of practical and cost-effective solutions to environmental problems.

The American Academy of Environmental Engineers and Scientists has established awards recognizing individuals and organizations for their contributions to environmental engineering, environmental science, and public health, and environmental protection.

Public Hearings Held on Coal Ash Permits



ADEM held public hearings adhering to social distancing

The Alabama Department of Environmental Management held three public hearings in October and November regarding permits drafted to address coal combustion residuals (CCR) containments.

The proposed permits require electric utilities to safely close unlined coal ash ponds at power plants and remediate any contaminated groundwater. The hearings along with public comment periods leading up to the hearings gave Alabamians the chance to raise concerns about the requirements in the draft permits.

On October 20, ADEM conducted a public hearing for a draft permit of Alabama Power Co.'s Plant Miller in western Jefferson County. Two days later, on Oct. 22 a hearing was held in Eutaw, at the Carver Community Center, for Plant Greene County. Following a

postponement due to Hurricane Zeta, a third hearing was conducted on Nov. 10 at Gadsden State Community College, for Alabama Power's Plant Gadsden.

Because of Covid-19 concerns, special social distancing requirements were put in place and monitored at all of the public hearings. All attendees were required to wear masks and were also screened with temperature checks prior to entering. Inside the hearing rooms, space and seating was monitored, media was allowed to be present with social distancing requirements, and each speaker was assigned a time slot to make their comments. The hearings were also recorded and placed on the Department's YouTube channel.

In addition to the public having an opportunity to speaking in person at the hearings, the public could also mail or email comments directly to ADEM during the comment periods that accompanied the hearings and actually ran past the date of the public hearings. This allowed for multiple chances for concerned citizens to voice their concerns about CCR plans at power plants in Jefferson, Greene, and Etowah counties. All of the comments received by ADEM were considered in the decisions to issue the permits, and ADEM provided a response to the issues raised.

ADEM Awards Recycling Grant to Pine Hill

The Alabama Department of Environmental Management awarded \$12,750 to the Town of Pine Hill in Wilcox County for a recycling project. The town has been approved for the grant under the Alabama Scrap Tire Fund to replace a sand area under a playground with recycled scrap tire mulch.

The mulch is made from recycled scrap tires and other rubber materials. It is a popular alternative to wood mulches to be used on playgrounds. The reason for this is for its physical features, such as durability and safety. The grant from ADEM funds the marketing demonstration project for the Town of Pine Hill which also includes educational outreach. The recycled tire material will be used in the playground at Depot Park, which sees an estimated annual visitation of approximately 35,000. The recycled tire material will provide a much safer surface for children and the mulch will consist of a 10-foot fall protection for those using the playground equipment. More than 4,800 scrap tires are expected to be recycled for this project.

The Alabama Scrap Tire Environmental Quality Act was passed in 2003 to comprehensively regulate scrap tire accumulations and to provide for cleanup and remediation of illegal scrap tire piles. The Act placed a \$1 per tire fee on all replacement tires sold to establish a scrap tire fund, and required ADEM to develop a program to regulate the management of scrap tires.

The regulations detail how scrap tires are managed from the time of generation to their ultimate disposition, whether reuse or disposal. Using funds from the \$1 per tire environmental fee, ADEM awards contracts to remediate scrap tire sites.

Alternatives to scrap tire disposal exist in the beneficial use of scrap tire material in a wide range of applications. One of the more popular applications is scrap tire mulch for parks and playgrounds, and the Town of Pine Hill and ADEM have teamed up to make this possible in the small Wilcox County community.

ADEM Funds Recycling Road Resurfacing Project

Coffee County has received a Scrap Tire Marketing grant award from the Alabama Department of Environmental Management that will provide \$288,791 to support the use of recycled scrap tires in Rubber Modified Asphalt.

Rubber Modified Asphalt helps to divert scrap tires away from the landfills and brings them to a beneficial end use.

According to the Asphalt Rubber Technology Service of Clemson University, approximately 400 to 970 scrap tires can be beneficially used per lane-mile of pavement, depending on which grade is used. The funds will be utilized in the resurfacing of a portion of Coffee County Road 110 utilizing Rubber Modified Asphalt in lieu of traditional asphalt.



ADEM presented a \$288,791 check to Coffee County officials

The resurfacing will extend for approximately two miles using a “Balance Mix” design with a Recycled Rubber Additive. It will be evaluated and compared to the approximately five miles of traditional asphalt resurfacing, also on Coffee County Road 110, utilizing the Alabama Department of Transportation’s current “Superpave Mix.”

The National Center for Asphalt Technology has partnered with the Coffee County Commission, and the Center will provide the training, mix design services, and evaluate the performance of the rubber modified mixture. They will also evaluate and report on the performance of the sections.

Alabama generates more than five million scrap tires each year and another four million come into the state annually for disposal. ADEM is working to enhance the recycling rate of these scrap tires and reduce the number of tires sent to landfills. This effort not only conserves landfill space and extends the life of existing landfills but also conserves natural resources and provides economic benefits by enhancing the use of recycled materials.

The Department’s efforts to enhance the recycling of scrap tires are supported through Alabama’s Scrap Tire Fund, which is funded by a \$1 per tire fee that is charged for each new, used, or retreaded tire sold in Alabama.

ADEM Donates Recycled Binders to Local Schools



ADEM donated binders to local schools

Each year, ADEM staff members collect used binders to be recycled and given away at the HSI, Inc. Health Fair. The binders are made available for low-income families to use for the upcoming school year. Due to COVID-19, the 2020 health fair was cancelled and ADEM coordinated a binder drop-off with the recycled binders to local schools.

Drop-off locations included Dalraida Elementary School, Highland Avenue Elementary School, Chisholm Elementary School, Capitol Heights Middle School, and Highland Gardens Elementary School. Each school received approximately four boxes of binders.

ADEM donated the binders to help educate children (and teachers) on the importance of recycling and the reuse of everyday materials.

Recycling helps reduce material going into landfills, helps the environment, and provides jobs. The binders were collected from staff at the main ADEM building in Montgomery, sorted and cleaned, and each binder included a flyer with a reminder to always recycle.

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.



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