

ADEM *UPDATE*

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ADEM Celebrating 30 Years of Success

The Alabama Department of Environmental Management is celebrating its 30th anniversary by highlighting the significant accomplishments that have been made in fulfilling its mission of assuring for all citizens of the state a safe, healthful, and productive environment. ADEM was created in 1982 when the Alabama Legislature consolidated the functions of various commissions, boards, and environmental programs into one organization. Since its creation, ADEM has been instrumental in creating a cleaner, healthier environment.

Alabama has experienced significant changes during the past 30 years. The overall population has increased to more than four million people, technological advances have improved the quality of life, and economic development has flourished during this time. Likewise, the efforts to protect the state's air, land, and water resources have undergone significant changes.

Air quality has improved from 26 areas not meeting national air quality standards to only two areas that are not meeting more stringent air quality standards. The cleanup of more than 700 illegal dumps and the removal of more than 7 million illegally disposed of scrap tires has improved Alabama's environment. The safe destruction of more than 650,000 chemical munitions has made Alabama safer.

Alabamians can now enjoy more than 300 miles of waterways classified as Outstanding Alabama Waters, over 800 miles of waterways designated as Outstanding National Resource Waters, and 25 coastal beaches where water quality data is routinely collected. Other significant accomplishments include the awarding of over \$7 million in recycling grants and the issuance of more than \$1 billion in low interest loans to support better wastewater and drinking water treatment. Advancements in information technology now support an electronic complaint system that allows environmental complaints to be submitted via the ADEM website as well as an electronic records management system that allows instant access to more than 1.7 million documents via the ADEM website.

"The environment in Alabama has improved substantially over the last 30 years," said ADEM Director Lance LeFleur. "This 30th anniversary year provides an opportunity to highlight and celebrate past progress and to thank those who have participated in our success. Although significant improvements have been made, there is still a lot of work to be done, especially in light of ever-tightening standards and declining budgets."

New National Air Quality Association Includes ADEM

Seventeen states, including Alabama, have joined the newly established Association of Air Pollution Control Agencies (AAPCA), which will create a technical forum to assist states with the application of various aspects of the Clean Air Act and associated regulations. AAPCA was created in 2012 when several states initiated discussions to form an association of state air quality agencies to focus on technical issues associated with the implementation of the Clean Air Act. To date, 17 states are members of the new group including Alabama, Florida, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Nebraska, New Mexico, Nevada, North Dakota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, West Virginia and Wyoming. Every state joining the group will be represented on its board of directors.

The main objectives of the new organization include creating a technical forum for agencies to exchange ideas/information, establishing an agency that allows individuals to support the work of AAPCA while improving technically/professionally, and operating a consensus-driven organization in which all members have an opportunity to provide input and influence the outcome of the Association's activities.

"ADEM is pleased to be a charter member of the Association of Air Pollution Control Agencies," said ADEM Air Division Chief Ron Gore. "Managing air quality presents daunting technical and implementation challenges and ADEM believes it is important to belong to an organization that will consider all members' points of view in responding to these challenges."

Slag Processing Project Nearing Completion in Gadsden

The Alabama Department of Environmental Management along with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, CMC Incorporated, and its subcontractor Harsco Corporation, are nearing the end of a public-private partnership to process stockpiled slag materials left behind when the steel mill at the former Gulf States Steel in Gadsden closed operations, and filed for bankruptcy more than 12 years ago.

Started in January 2010, the project was one of the largest sustainable remediation projects of its type in the United States. Since the process began, the CMC/Harsco team, with oversight from ADEM and EPA, has processed more than 1.6 million cubic yards of abandoned slag to stop continuing releases of contaminants to adjacent wetlands and surface waters and to stabilize the site in order to reduce the potential for future releases.

The removal activities took place in three phases. Initially, hazards associated with the former coke plant, including 1.1 million gallons of waste and 10,000 cubic yards of coal tar sludge, were properly disposed of and waste lagoons were stabilized and capped. Approximately 18 million pounds of metal was recycled.

In phase two, more than 14,000 gallons of waste, 300 pounds of mercury, and 400 cubic yards of asbestos-containing materials from inside the plant's powerhouse were disposed of and the structure was dismantled. Drainage and disposal of transformer oil and circuit breaker fluids was completed and approximately 6,500 gallons of non-PCB transformer oil and 13 million pounds of metal were recycled.

In the final phase of the project prior to closure activities, two residual mill waste surface impoundment areas were cleaned out and perimeter trenches were enlarged to properly handle surface water flow from the slag piles and other mill waste areas. Surface water was routed to a holding lagoon on the site.

A landfill was created onsite for about 1.6 million cubic yards of processed slag materials that could not be recycled. Any remaining unprocessed slag (about 30 percent of the original volume) will remain onsite and be contoured to facilitate runoff to trenches and a lagoon.

Approximately 542 million pounds of metal-bearing scrap was recycled from the processed slag and approximately 60,000 cubic yards of recyclable metal-bearing scrap, which has been segregated from the slag, remains on site waiting to be recycled.

On an economic development basis, the project created 20 new jobs, all hired locally within the Gadsden area, and generated a projected local economic benefit of approximately \$7 million over the last three years of the project's duration.

These economic figures include salaries, tax revenues, the use of local contractors, and other project costs such as parts and fuel.

ADEM will continue to monitor conditions at the site after closure activities are completed.



ADEM's Steve Cobb along with Harsco and EPA officials view the greatly reduced slag piles and retention lagoons during closure activities at the former Gulf States Steel site.

Recycling Challenge Increases Awareness



Carver High School students won the completion by collecting more than 1,000 pounds of paper, plastic, and aluminum.

In an effort to raise awareness and provide an educational experience for the merits of recycling, the Alabama Department of Environmental Management invited two Montgomery high schools to participate in the “Rep Your School 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.

In March, Jefferson Davis and Carver High Schools participated in the challenge. At the end of the competition week, Carver had the largest amount of recycled materials (more than 1,000 pounds) receiving \$301 for their efforts.

Recycling in Alabama is a \$6 billion industry that employs more than 10,000 people. A ten percent increase in recycling could yield

an additional 1,400 new jobs with an estimated, gross personal income of over \$66 million. ADEM is proud to provide high school students with this opportunity to represent their school in this recycling challenge which benefits local communities as well as Alabama’s environment.

Nonpoint Source Conference Held in Montgomery

ADEM held its 24th Annual Nonpoint Source Conference in January at the Renaissance Hotel in downtown Montgomery. The event was attended by more than 320 environmental engineers, biologists, geologists, municipal leaders, and water quality specialists.

The conference was entitled “The Secret to Nonpoint Source Success - Partners,” and included an overview of the state’s Nonpoint Source Program, which has been in place for more than two decades. The conference also included 20 exhibitors with displays and handouts. The numerous sessions offered attendees a variety of updates on efforts to achieve improved water quality in local watersheds. These included the installation of best management practices, the development of education/outreach materials, and the implementation of watershed management plans to enable local stakeholders to play an active role in protecting water quality.

Marjan Farzaad, Chief of the EPA Region 4 Stormwater and NPS Section, served as the keynote speaker and focused on changes in the 2013 federal grant guidance as it relates to the Nonpoint Source Program. In addition, ADEM staff presented updates on various initiatives including funding 319 projects through State Revolving Funds and how GIS has become a fluid tool for water resource management. Participants also received an update on water policy efforts from the Alabama Water Agencies Working Group.

A number of organizations and agencies participated in the conference including the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Geological Survey of Alabama, the Natural Resource Conservation Service, various Soil and Water Conservation Districts, and the Alabama Clean Water Partnership.



Approximately 320 people attended the NPS conference in Montgomery

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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