

# ADEM *UPDATE*

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## First WaterCARE Announcement Made in Selma



**(L-R) EPA's Jim Giattina, Selma Mayor George Evans, EPA's Ellen Gilinsky, and ADEM Director Lance LeFleur at the foot of the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma**

Historic Selma, Alabama was the site of the first announcement of a new community water assistance program.

On January 20, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced it is providing \$50,000 in financial and technical guidance to help Selma invest in drinking water and wastewater infrastructure.

EPA's new WaterCARE program will assist the community in developing innovative financial strategies for water infrastructure in order to meet long term needs. WaterCARE stands for Community Assistance for Resiliency and Excellence.

ADEM Director Lance LeFleur, Selma Mayor George

Evans, and Ellen Gilinsky, Senior Policy Advisor in EPA's Office of Water made the announcement at a news conference at the historic St. James Hotel in Selma. ADEM, EPA, and city officials also toured the Selma water treatment and wastewater treatment facilities.

"Selma is a great place for us to work. There's a great water treatment facility but the pipes that go in and out of the facility are aging," Gilinsky said. "They leak from all the rain you get here and that creates problems with runoff into the river and also too much water coming into the sewage treatment plant."

"We are committed to Selma, and we are committed to the Black Belt," said ADEM Director Lance LeFleur.

Nationally, EPA will provide \$500,000 for financial and technical assistance for 10 communities. Through WaterCARE, EPA can help communities conduct financial evaluations, rate and revenue studies, water efficiency studies, and resiliency assessments. Under the WaterCARE program, qualifying communities have a population less than 100,000 and a need to address public health challenges, median household income considerations, and a readiness to start capital improvement projects.

EPA and ADEM will work with Selma to collaborate on activities needed to develop a financial strategy to meet their local needs. The program is designed to assist the city in developing the appropriate technology needed for their wastewater treatment plant, determine asset management practices that could be undertaken to identify short and long-term capital planning strategies to replace aging infrastructure, and to explore possibilities for regional partnerships to assist surrounding communities with wastewater needs.

"In order to get the assistance we need and to get the funding we need, we have to be at the table," said Mayor Evans. "We now have a chance to explore some opportunities to make our program even better."

## Wetumpka WWTP Earns State and National Recognition



**ADEM Director Lance LeFleur presented employees at Wetumpka's Wilako WWTP with an award for optimization and energy-savings**

ADEM staff and officials with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency gathered in Wetumpka on January 21 to tour the Wilako Wastewater Treatment Plant. The facility and its operations team were then presented a plaque for their optimization and energy savings efforts over the last year-and-a-half.

In the spring of 2014, EPA's Region 4 Office along with ADEM assembled a team to conduct an Energy Management Initiative (EMI) for Alabama Water and Wastewater Utilities. Wetumpka's Water and Sewer Board accepted the invitation to be one of ten utilities to participate in the EMI with the Wilako WWTP, located just two miles from the Coosa River.

The plant treats approximately 1.5 million gallons per day (mgd) of municipal wastewater. It utilizes an extended air activated sludge treatment process and is designed to treat up to 4.5 mgd at

average daily flow conditions. The facility has two aeration basins and a pair of 500,000 gallon final clarifiers.

Plant aeration at Wilako is provided by a dozen high-speed vertical turbine aerators, with each aerator operating six hours per day. Each basin also has two 40-horsepower mixers, operating 11-hours a day.

The ADEM-EPA team identified that the treatment system could be optimized by operating only two aerators and two mixers for 18-hours per day. Shutting off the aerators in the single basin mode enables the plant to run without oxygen for 4-6 hours per day. This process and control system change was made with no capital expenditures yet reduces electrical power usage resulting in savings of \$70,000 annually.

Wetumpka has realized savings in energy costs by changing its plant operation to optimize aerator efficiency incurring lower power usage. Close operator oversight has been necessary to implement this energy savings initiative, and Wilako's operators do an excellent job keeping the plant running at peak efficiency, earning them recognition from ADEM and EPA.

The changes in operation also yield benefits to the environment: reducing the amount of nitrogen in plant effluent by 12-tons per year and dramatically reducing green house gas generation. Plant management continues to seek additional ways to implement energy savings by addressing plant lighting and upgrading aerobic digester equipment and controls.

## ADEM Employees Participate in Wear Red Day

A large number of ADEM employees turned out in support of National Wear Red Day on February 5. Sponsored by the American Heart Association, Wear Red Day is designed to help raise awareness of the dangers of heart disease and stroke, and specifically to increase funding for research to help reduce heart disease and stroke in women.

Nationwide, heart disease and stroke cause one-in-three deaths among women each year, which is more than all cancers combined.

On National Wear Red Day, ADEM employees wore red and gathered in the main lobby to support the efforts of the AHA to bring attention to these issues and to encourage others to take action to live healthier lives.



**On Feb. 5, ADEM Employees participated in National Wear Red Day**

## Nonpoint Source Conference Held in Montgomery



**More than 280 people attended ADEM's Annual NPS Conference**

ADEM held its 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Nonpoint Source Conference on January 20 at the Renaissance Hotel & Spa Convention Center in downtown Montgomery. The event was attended by more than 280 environmental engineers, biologists, geologists, municipal leaders, and water quality specialists.

The conference included an overview of the State's Nonpoint Source Program, which has been in place since 1989. The event also included more than a dozen exhibits with displays and handouts.

The 2016 conference offered attendees updates on efforts to improve water quality in local watersheds. These included presentations on the importance of cooperative partnerships, tools and technology, low impact development in urban projects, sediment reduction, and the development of watershed management plans to reduce nonpoint source pollution.

Marlon Cook, the Director of the Groundwater Assessment Program with the Geological Survey of Alabama served at the keynote luncheon speaker. His presentation focused on the future of irrigation in Alabama and how that is affected by climate, policy, and water availability. He said water resources should be managed in a sustainable manner to support the State's economy and to protect natural systems to enhance the quality of life for all citizens.

ADEM Director Lance LeFleur presented a brief Departmental update at the conference. Also, ADEM staff presented an update of proposed changes to ADEM's Construction Stormwater General Permit.

Many organizations and agencies participated in the conference including Region 4 of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Mobile Bay National Estuary Program, the Alabama Cooperative Extension System, and the Alabama Department of Transportation.

In addition, Ashley Campbell from the City of Daphne and Leslie Gahagan from the City of Foley gave presentations on how to "Create a Clean Water Future" program. It is a public service campaign to help Alabamians learn more about stormwater runoff and its impacts; increase demand for stormwater management programs; and provide tools that empower Alabama residents to reduce polluted runoff into waterways.



**NPS Annual Conference exhibit**

## Annual UST Conference Set for April 20-21

ADEM will host its 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Underground Storage Tank Assessment and Remediation Conference on April 20-21 at the Gordon Persons Building in Downtown Montgomery. Guest speakers are scheduled to give presentations concerning petroleum assessment and remediation topics, and ADEM staff will discuss various topics of concern to environmental firms. More information is available at [www.adem.alabama.gov](http://www.adem.alabama.gov).

# 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](http://adem.alabama.gov).



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