

ADEM UPDATE

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Alabama 2nd in Southeast to Receive EPA Approval

The Alabama Department of Environmental Management has received federal approval to revise its Public Water System Supervision Program to incorporate the Ground Water Rule. In May, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency officially notified ADEM of the final approval.

In a letter from EPA Region 4 Administrator, Heather McTeer Toney, to ADEM Director Lance LeFleur, Toney praised Alabama's work in this specific area. "I congratulate the Alabama Department of Environmental Management for its diligent efforts in this revision of the PWSS Program and I look forward to continued cooperative efforts with the State of Alabama in providing a safe drinking water supply to its citizens."

Alabama was just the second state in the Southeast (EPA - Region 4) to receive primacy approval from EPA. There are 421 public water systems in the state that use groundwater as a source for drinking water.

The Department's key activities under the PWSS Program include developing and maintaining an inventory of public water systems, providing technical assistance to water system managers and operators, ensuring that water systems regularly inform their customers about the quality of the water they are providing, and maintaining a compliance and enforcement program to make sure water systems comply with all of the state's drinking water requirements.

Ensuring that all Alabamians are provided access to clean, safe drinking water is a continuing priority for the Department.

High School Students Visit for Earth Day Event



More than 75 high school students attended Earth Day events at ADEM

The Alabama Department of Environmental Management celebrated Earth Day 2014 by hosting a special event for more than 75 high school students from the River Region.

On April 22, students from G.W. Carver High School, Jefferson Davis High School, and Prattville Christian Academy visited the ADEM central office on Coliseum Boulevard to learn about environmental programs that are being implemented on a daily basis to safeguard and preserve Alabama's valuable natural resources.

The visiting students received guided tours and hands-on demonstrations from ADEM staff related to a wide-range of environmental programs including water quality sampling, fish tissue monitoring, air monitoring, recycling, solid waste disposal, and efforts that ensure Alabamians are provided with clean, safe drinking water. Students also learned about career opportunities at ADEM and were encouraged to pursue careers in science-related fields.

The first organized "Earth Day" was held in 1970, with more than 20 million Americans demonstrating in various cities. Now, it is an annual event on which activities are held worldwide to demonstrate support for environmental protection. While many people celebrate Earth Day one day each year, every day is Earth Day at ADEM as the staff works to protect and preserve Alabama's air, land, and water resources.

ADEM Water Permitting Authority Affirmed

“This is a great victory for Alabama,” said ADEM Director Lance LeFleur to the Alabama Environmental Management Commission on April 11. Director LeFleur was referring to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s decision to confirm Alabama’s ability to issue and administer water permits under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) program.

“It is also a great victory for the working citizens of Alabama and their families who depend on the State being able to attract and retain industry that provides jobs for their livelihoods while maintaining a safe and healthful environment,” said LeFleur.

In a petition filed in January 2010 by a group of environmental organizations calling themselves the ADEM Reform Coalition, a request was made for EPA to withdraw ADEM’s authority to issue and administer NPDES permits. If this had been granted, it would have resulted in the loss of ADEM’s authority to protect and improve Alabama’s water quality. Such a loss of State control could have dramatically increased the financial and regulatory burden on individual citizens, existing industry, and industries considering locating in Alabama.

The Department was notified of the EPA action in April in a letter stating that the agency found no allegations worthy of taking the NPDES permitting authority away from ADEM. After an exhaustive investigation by EPA and the expenditure of substantial financial and human resources by both EPA and ADEM, the decision was made and the findings made public.

“Using actual, objective, and verifiable data to measure results achieved by the ADEM Water Program, I am pleased to report that we were notified that EPA found that none, absolutely none, of the allegations are worthy of withdrawing Alabama’s ability to issue and administer water permits,” said LeFleur.

Recycling Challenge Increases Awareness



ADEM Director Lance LeFleur makes check presentation to PCA

For the second consecutive year, the ADEM High School Recycling Challenge was a big success.

In an effort to raise awareness and provide an educational experience for the merits of recycling, ADEM invited three area high schools to participate in the “School Recycling Challenge.”

The event was designed to motivate students to do their part to increase recycling in Alabama. The program had three steps: sign up to earn cash for your school; challenge each student, teacher, and neighborhood to join your cause; and report on your total recycling effort.

Earlier this spring, G.W. Carver High School, Jefferson Davis High School, and

Prattville Christian Academy participated in the challenge. At the end of the competition, Prattville Christian had the largest amount of recycled materials, and received a check for \$524.90 for their efforts, while Jefferson Davis High School received \$295 for second place, and Carver High School received \$151.10. ADEM Director Lance LeFleur made the check presentations as part of the ADEM Earth Day activities on April 22.

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 the opportunity to represent their school in this recycling challenge which benefits local communities as well as Alabama’s environment.

Inaugural Brownfields Conference

The Alabama Department of Environmental Management held its first-ever Brownfields Redevelopment Conference on April 8 in downtown Montgomery. The event was attended by mayors, developers, environmental consultants, and other stakeholders.

Brownfields are rural or urban industrial sites that are abandoned or underused because of real or perceived contamination. Numerous cities and counties in Alabama face the challenges of putting these idle properties back into use.

The Brownfields Program is a valuable community resource that, through redevelopment and reuse, can bring important economic benefits to an area and also serve as the centerpiece in comprehensive redevelopment strategies.

“This program is a key to rebuilding parts of Alabama cities and towns, along with creating jobs and addressing environmental concerns,” said ADEM Director Lance LeFleur, who provided the opening remarks at the event. “This inaugural conference is an excellent forum for community, government, and private stakeholders to convene and discuss how to make the most of these redevelopment opportunities.”

A number of ADEM employees made presentations at the one-day conference on various topics including redevelopment, waste disposal requirements, Alabama’s risk-based corrective action guidance, and the State’s Revolving Loan Fund. Presentations were also made by representatives from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on the overall Brownfields Program and brownfield redevelopment efforts along the Selma-to-Montgomery Civil Rights Trail.



The inaugural ADEM Brownfields Conference, held at the Gordon Persons Building, was attended by more than 85 mayors, developers, environmental consultants, and other stakeholders

Thousands Attend Water Festival at AUM



More than 2,700 attended the water festival at AUM

More than 2,700 fourth graders participated in the 14th annual Montgomery County Water Festival held at Auburn University-Montgomery in March. The festival is designed to educate fourth grade students about all aspects of surface water, groundwater, and other natural resources.

The students who participated in the two-day event were able to learn about the source of their drinking water and how to protect water resources for themselves and for future generations. Through educational sessions and

hands-on experiments, the students learned about the many ways water is used and needed in the environment.

ADEM staff helped to organize the event and taught many of the sessions at the festival to give the children an understanding of the many uses of water. The children were able to experience hands-on learning at several activities including making edible aquifers to learn about protecting groundwater, learning about water conservation through the “drop in a bucket” activity, and understanding water filtration by building a water filter using sand, gravel, and pieces of charcoal.

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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