

The Art of Recycling Featured at ADEM



Creative sculptures were on display at ADEM in June

The Alabama Department of Environmental Management recently displayed some stylish art in the main lobby of its Montgomery office.

However, this was a different kind of art. The sculptured items on display were all made from litter by high school and middle school students across the state. It was part of the Clean Campus Program sponsored by Alabama PALS - People Against a Littered State.

More than 550 schools are enrolled in the program that is designed to involve students in grades 7-12 in litter control, beautification, recycling and cleanup efforts, which will instill good stewardship and environmental awareness for future generations.

ADEM Director Ed Poolos began his opening remarks to the Alabama Environmental Management Commission on June 12 by highlighting the program.

“PALS recycled art contest is a creative component of the Alabama Clean Campus program, which focuses on litter education and recycling initiatives in schools,” said Poolos. “The contest encourages students to re-use materials collected during litter pickup to make art.”

According to the PALS website, the recycled art contest helps with community involvement in campus activities such as cleanup and recycling, promotes anti-litter education, and teaches students to “reduce, reuse, and recycle.” The contest continues to grow each year with interests not only from students, but teachers, administrators, and local officials.

“PALS has worked for decades to combat litter, and to protect the environment. They work with numerous organizations throughout the state to bring awareness to litter prevention and cleanup efforts,” said Poolos. “ADEM is proud to support PALS and the recycled art contest.”

ADEM Participates in Optimist Club’s Career Fair

ADEM and its employees strive to reach students across the state and teach them about the exciting fields of science and technology. To better reach these students, ADEM partners with local groups and schools to participate in special events like career fairs to demonstrate not only how the Department safeguards the environment, but how students can become involved, and increase their environmental awareness.

ADEM employees recently attended the Central Montgomery Optimist Club’s 12th Annual “Dare to Dream” Career Fair at McKee Middle School.

ADEM staff provided stories about their passion for the field of science, as well as providing examples of the many different things Departmental scientists do protect Alabama’s land, air, and water. The employees also handed out reading materials and answered questions.



ADEM staff answer questions at Career Fair

A Successful “Earth Day” at the Zoo



Children enjoy the hands-on exhibits at the zoo on Earth Day

The annual “Earth Day Safari” at the Montgomery Zoo was another huge success. Hundreds of children - and adults - visited the zoo on April 22 and 23. On two beautiful spring days, they were able to spend a fun-filled, educational, and adventurous day at the zoo learning about daily habits that can affect the environment, wildlife, plant life, and the communities in which they live.

The Alabama Department of Environmental Management has been a long-time sponsor and participant in the event, and this year was no exception.

At ADEM, every day is “Earth Day” and dozens of ADEM employees volunteered to be a part of this annual event to help raise environmental awareness. It also allows ADEM to

not only observe Earth Day, but to demonstrate the crucial work the Department does to protect Alabama’s natural resources. A number of tents and booths were set up with interactive exhibits on various topics such as recycling, stormwater runoff, brownfields redevelopment, and air monitoring.

The event encouraged students to see multiple exhibits and interact to learn the important role they play in safeguarding the environment. Students were able to complete a form to earn prizes, and they also got to see many of the zoo animals and learn the value of plants and animals to any ecosystem.

ADEM Director Ed Poolos and Deputy Director Jeff Kitchens were able to attend on both days and to interact with the children, and to thank ADEM staff for their help with all the exhibits and giveaways. The event helps the Department strengthen external communications and increase environmental awareness by participating in community activities and to promote ways to safeguard Alabama’s natural resources.

Zoo officials report that this year’s event went very smooth considering the construction that is taking place at the zoo. The main entrance is temporarily closed while renovations are underway. But, they say that folks found their way around the obstacles and enjoyed what they called, “the perfect outdoor classroom.”

ADEM Director Speaks at Rural Water Conference

ADEM Director Ed Poolos helped kick off the Alabama Rural Water Association’s annual conference in March at the Renaissance Hotel Convention Center in Downtown Montgomery. Speaking to the crowd of water operators, technicians, and companies from around the state, Poolos gave an overview of his background, including his work as the on-scene coordinator for the BP Oil spill in 2010, and his work with the Water Division in his first several years with ADEM.

He also spoke about securing the first funding for water and wastewater operator certification through working with former U.S. Senator Richard Shelby. “Senator Shelby was on the Appropriations Committee, and he called and said, is there anything that’s needed in the environmental arena?”

The answer to that question came in the form of creating the first operator certification program in Alabama. “The best way to protect our water is to have the best operators in the country right here in our state,” said Poolos. “I’m here because I look forward to working with you and your systems, and I look forward to the success we will have together.”

The ARWA is a non-profit agency representing water and wastewater systems serving rural communities and the commercial firms that support these systems. The purpose of the ARWA is to provide assistance to these systems to comply with state and federal regulations, to help them with management and operational issues, and to provide training initiatives to promote personnel development and efficiency.



ADEM Hosts Training in Cullman and Montgomery



ADEM hosted two training sessions recently for AFO/CAFO

The Alabama Department of Environmental Management hosted two training events for Qualified Credentialed Professionals, or QCPs, who perform work for farmers that operate Animal Feeding Operations (AFO) and Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFO). Alabama has more than 1,000 AFO/CAFO facilities across the state with the majority of those being used to support the state's robust poultry industry.

The AFO/CAFO regulations require routine inspections to be performed by QCPs during the construction of new facilities and the operation of existing facilities. The regulations focus on the use of best management practices (BMPs) for erosion/sediment control during construction as well

as the proper disposal of animal mortality and the effective land application of animal wastes in a manner that protects water quality.

Scott Hughes, Chief of the Field Operations Division, opened the April training event held at the Alabama Department of Agriculture & Industries building with a group of about 20 members from the agricultural community in attendance. Discussions focused on the submittal of complete Construction Best Management Practices Plans (CBMPPs), the proper use of BMPs during the construction process, and the need to coordinate with the Alabama Soil & Water Conservation Districts on the submittal of registration documents.

A second training event was held in May at the North Alabama Agriplex located in Cullman. Ryan Cooper, Chief of the Office of Field Services in the Field Operations Division, opened that event and provided an update on ADEM efforts to ensure QCPs are providing services that are beneficial to the farmers. In addition, Beth Bielen of the ADEM Information Systems Branch provided material at both training events on the Alabama Environmental Permitting and Compliance System (AEPACS), which is an online tool created by ADEM for external stakeholders to submit permit applications, inspection reports, and compliance monitoring records.

Numerous agricultural stakeholder groups participated in each of the training events. Ray Hillburn representing the Alabama Poultry & Egg Association, and Kent Stanford representing the Alabama Cooperative Extension System, provided comments on the impact of agriculture in Alabama while Perry Oakes and Earl Norton - representing the Alabama Soil and Water Conservation Committee - spoke about effective stormwater management practices to reduce erosion/sediment impacts.

EPA Recognizes ADEM Excellence and Innovation

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency recently recognized ADEM and the Greene County towns of Eutaw and Boligee for excellence and innovation regarding a water infrastructure project. In partnership with the Town of Eutaw, ADEM pursued a regional solution with the nearby Town of Boligee. Eutaw assumed ownership and operation of Boligee's sanitary sewer collection system, which was at risk of failure, and secured funding to upgrade both towns' systems. This joint effort enabled both communities to move forward with critical infrastructure upgrades to protect residents from the risk of raw sewage exposure.

The wastewater restoration project cost more than \$4.5 million and was funded through ADEM's state revolving fund (SRF) program, which provides communities with low-cost financing for a wide range of water quality and infrastructure projects.

EPA Assistant Administrator for Water, Jessica Kramer, recently recognized 48 projects for excellence and innovation, including this one in Alabama. These projects, financed in part by state SRF programs, demonstrate the importance of water infrastructure to support healthy citizens, and lay a foundation for economic prosperity.

The SRF program has provided a foundation of state and federal investment in water infrastructure for decades. The program directly supports ADEM and EPA's emphasis on the need for clean air, land, and water for everyone.

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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