

ADEM UPDATE

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Statewide Solid Waste Meetings Underway

The Alabama Department of Environmental Management has partnered with Auburn University in conducting a series of statewide meetings to examine the current solid waste management process in Alabama. The findings from the meetings will be used in a comprehensive study that will make suggestions on the landfill permitting process, how waste is handled, and the expansion of recycling/reuse programs.

Nine of the meetings have already been held with four more scheduled for October and November. A website has been established at www.eng.auburn.edu/asws to provide the public with more information on the project. The website also lists the upcoming meetings along with information on the previous sessions that have been held in Montgomery, Anniston, Auburn, Troy, Huntsville, Repton, Uniontown, Florence, and Decatur.

In 2011, the Alabama Legislature directed ADEM to evaluate the state's solid waste management procedures. To ensure an unbiased perspective in conducting this evaluation, ADEM selected Auburn University to oversee the study and to conduct the meetings around the state to gather input from the public.

In an effort to solicit as much public feedback as possible, the research team at Auburn is not only accepting comments in person during the meetings, but is also accepting online comments during a two-week period following each public meeting. All comments will be used solely for the purpose of identifying improvements to the solid waste management programs in Alabama. Comments will be compiled into a report that will be presented to ADEM, and the Alabama Legislature, along with recommended program enhancements for the handling of solid waste in Alabama.



Nine solid waste management meetings have already been held and additional meetings are scheduled

New Member Joins Commission



Mary J. Merritt

Mary J. Merritt was named to the Alabama Environmental Management Commission in the At-Large position in August 2012 by Governor Robert Bentley. Mrs. Merritt is a graduate of the Alabama Aviation Technical College and earned a Criminal Justice Certification from Enterprise State Junior College. She has 25 years of experience in real estate sales and is involved with numerous real estate associations including the Alabama Association of Realtors where she currently holds the position of State Director.

Mrs. Merritt is also a member of the Women's Council of Realtors, National Association of Realtors, and Wiregrass Board of Realtors. Mrs. Merritt has more than 30 years of experience as the co-owner of an income tax, bookkeeping and payroll business in Enterprise.

As an active member of her community she has served with the Enterprise Chamber of Commerce since 2003 and with the Enterprise Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors since 2007. She is a member and past President of the social club Club Yesepoch, Inc. and chairs the outreach ministry for Beth-El Faith Church. Mrs. Merritt's dealings with the public in the real estate market, her small business experience, and her community involvement bring to the Commission valuable insight into the lives and experiences of many of Alabama's citizens.

Two Million in Recycling Grants Awarded

A recent report developed by ADEM determined that during 2011 over \$193 million worth of recyclable materials were disposed of in Alabama landfills at a cost of more than \$25 million. The report, entitled “The Economics of Recycling in Alabama and Opportunities for Growth” is available on the ADEM website and highlights the fact that Alabamians can enhance economic growth by increasing recycling opportunities.

In an effort to enhance recycling, along with economic growth, ADEM recently announced the recipients of more than \$2 million in recycling grants. The grants will be used by local governments and non-profit organizations to purchase equipment such as balers, compactors, recycling trailers, recycling bins, collection trucks, and roll-off containers that will make recycling more convenient for Alabamians.

The grant funds may be utilized to initiate new recycling programs, or enhance existing programs, and can also be used to support education/outreach activities promoting the importance of recycling at the local level. “The Department is very proud to be able to provide these grant funds that will enhance recycling opportunities from Florence down to Daphne and from Huntsville to Dothan,” said ADEM Director Lance LeFleur. “Recycling can provide environmental benefits and economic benefits for citizens across Alabama and I am pleased that ADEM can utilize our financial resources and technical resources to support this effort.”

The recycling grant funds are made possible through the Solid Wastes & Recyclable Materials Management Act passed by the Alabama Legislature in 2008. The legislation imposed a \$1 per ton fee on all solid wastes disposed of in Alabama landfills. A portion of the proceeds generated by this fee supported the creation of the Alabama Recycling Fund, providing the foundation for ADEM to award the recycling grants on an annual basis.



Recycling grants totaled over \$2 million in 2012

Black Warrior Watershed Conference Held in Tuscaloosa

In August, ADEM staff participated in a watershed conference sponsored by the Alabama Clean Water Partnership. The event took place at the North River Yacht Club in Tuscaloosa, with the theme being the “State of the Black Warrior River Basin.”

With various organizations, groups, and state agencies being asked to “do more with less,” the one-day conference provided 89 participants with an opportunity to hear and present strategies to promote healthy watersheds and improve water quality in Alabama. The event was designed to help the collaboration efforts between various groups with specific water quality goals for industry, recreation, and transportation. Open discussions were held on how to provide better projects through effective partnerships and how to identify future activities to enhance long-term water resource management.

The conference brought together representatives from watershed groups, municipalities, industry, and resource agencies to share information, express particular interests, and plan more effectively for the future. The Alabama Clean Water Partnership provides a neutral forum for a diverse and inclusive coalition of public and private sector individuals and groups to work together to protect and preserve water resources and aquatic ecosystems throughout Alabama.

Highlights of the meeting included an update on Alabama’s surface water monitoring plan by ADEM, a case study of the North River Watershed Management Plan, and a status report on the Black Warrior River Basin by the U.S. Geological Survey. Additional planning sessions provided input to aid the Alabama Clean Water Partnership in setting goals and helping participants take actions to better protect Alabama’s valuable natural resources.



The “State of the Black Warrior River Basin” meeting took place August 1 at the North River Yacht Club in Tuscaloosa

Public Hearing Held for Triennial Review



ADEM held a public hearing in July on water quality standards

Concerned citizens, environmental groups, and other interested parties had an opportunity on July 19 to comment on water quality standards at a public hearing conducted by the Alabama Department of Environmental Management. The public hearing, which was held at the ADEM central office building in Montgomery, was part of the Department's *Triennial Review of Alabama's Water Quality Standards*.

ADEM conducts the *Triennial Review of Alabama's Water Quality Standards* at least once every three years as a formal review of the state's designated uses of Alabama's vast surface water resources and the water quality standards that protect those designated uses. Alabama's water quality standards are designed to protect water quality in rivers, lakes, creeks, streams, and estuaries. The standards also

establish criteria for the propagation of wildlife, fish, and other aquatic life as well as the protection of human health.

"The Department is committed to safeguarding Alabama's water quality and we hope the public will use this precious resource wisely and assist us in our efforts to maintain water quality for future generations," said ADEM Director Lance LeFleur. "We encourage input from everyone in regards to the triennial review process and our efforts to protect Alabama's water resources."

As part of the triennial review process, ADEM held a public comment period as well as a public hearing to give citizens, stakeholders, and other groups the opportunity to submit comments on the issues. The Department will review all comments and data that were submitted during the triennial review process to make science-based decisions in its efforts to protect water quality.

Gerald Hardy Retires from ADEM

ADEM Land Division Chief Gerald Hardy retired from the Department on August 31 after 38 years of service in state government. He had worked at ADEM since the time of its creation in 1982.

Prior to that, Mr. Hardy worked for the Alabama Air Pollution Control Commission, which was one of the many organizations that were combined to form the Alabama Department of Environmental Management.

He spent the last 14 years of his ADEM career as the Land Division Chief and noted the new initiatives, program changes, and various technical updates that have occurred during that time. Some of the biggest achievements for ADEM and the Land Division in the last decade-and-a-half include the destruction of dangerous chemical weapons at the Anniston Chemical Demilitarization Facility along with the remediation of large scrap tire dumps in Attalla, Geneva County, and Pritchard. Mr. Hardy also noted the clean-up of large slag piles at Gulf States Steel in Gadsden and recycling initiatives that have resulted in the awarding of almost \$7 million in recycling grants.

A Georgia Tech graduate, he plans to continue working and has already accepted a position with Matrix Environmental Services. On August 30, he was honored for his many years of service with a large reception attended by friends, family, and co-workers.



Gerald Hardy

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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