

# ADEM *UPDATE*

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## ADEM Awards Recycling Grants

The Alabama Department of Environmental Management recently awarded more than \$2.5 million in grants to boost recycling efforts across the state.

The grants from the Alabama Recycling Fund are for the 2026 fiscal year and were awarded to cities, counties, solid waste authorities and other groups.

ADEM presented the grants during the Alabama Recycling Coalition's Annual Conference and Expo, held September 10-12 at the Westin Huntsville. The grants are made possible through the Solid Wastes and Recyclable Materials Management Act, passed by the Alabama Legislature in 2008.

"ADEM is delighted to be able again to award grants to assist and, in many cases, enable these worthy recycling projects," ADEM Director Edward Poolos said. "This is the 17<sup>th</sup> year of the grant program, and we can clearly see the impact this funding is having as recycling continues to grow in Alabama. Every item that is recycled is one less thing that ends up in a landfill or littered alongside our roads, on our land or in our water."

The grants help pay for educational materials, processing and collection equipment, and other needs for recycling programs. The funds benefit individuals, households, and communities statewide.



**ADEM awarded over \$2.5 million in recycling checks**

## Poolos Opens Groundwater Event in Wetumpka



**Ed Poolos speaks at ADEM's Groundwater Conference**

The newly appointed Director of ADEM, Ed Poolos, recently helped open the Department's 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Groundwater Conference at the Wetumpka Civic Center on August 13.

Director Poolos, who is in his first month of duty, began his remarks by welcoming everyone to the conference. After giving a brief background of his life, the Director changed his focus to being prepared as manufacturing returns to America, telling the crowd, "We have to be prepared for this, and we have to have a staff that is ready too."

Director Poolos also highlighted just how important groundwater operations are for the state. "Nearly half of Alabama's drinking water comes from groundwater," said Director Poolos, "so it's extremely important and what you do is important."

This year's conference featured speakers from different organizations including Auburn University and Synterra, and topics such as groundwater remediation, extraction, and source control.

ADEM's Groundwater Branch administers and provides technical support for regulatory programs related to groundwater protection or cleanup. This Branch directly administers the Underground Storage Tank program.

## ADEM Donates Binders to Schools

“Reduce, reuse, and recycle,” is not just a slogan, but something that the Alabama Department of Environmental Management puts into practice.

For years now, ADEM has collected used binders from many of the Department’s divisions, sections, and branches to be recycled and given away statewide. Once gathered, the binders are sorted and cleaned, and each one is equipped with recycling flyer to remind children to do their part to help reduce, reuse, and recycle.

The binders are made available for school systems, health fairs, and other events. ADEM targets low-income communities and families to receive the binders with drop-offs all across the state.

The binders help educate students (and teachers, siblings, and parents) on the importance of recycling and the reuse of everyday materials. Recycling helps reduce material going into landfills, helps the environment, and provides jobs.

This August, ADEM dropped off binders at multiple locations across central and south Alabama just in time for the back-to-school rush. ADEM staff delivered binders to the Wiregrass - to school systems in Geneva and Houston counties - and to the Black Belt, visiting schools in Wilcox County. In addition, a number of schools received binders in Montgomery.

The Department supports back-to-school efforts to encourage everyone to recycle. The Alabama Recycling Fund promotes local recycling efforts by providing reimbursement grants to local governments to develop, implement, and enhance recycling programs.



**ADEM’s Ann Colley and Dylan Hurst with Assistant Principal Brittani Blackmon at Chisholm Elementary**

## CAFO Public Hearing Held in August



**ADEM conducted a CAFO public hearing on August 19**

The Alabama Department of Environmental Management administers environmental regulations related to animal agriculture activities. ADEM monitors Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFO) and Animal Feeding Operations (AFO) to ensure that water quality is protected.

All CAFOs in the state are required to register with the Department and all AFO/CAFOs are required to implement and maintain effective best management practices (BMPs) for animal waste

production, storage, treatment, transport, and proper disposal that meet or exceed federal and state technical standards and guidelines.

On August 19, ADEM conducted a public hearing in Montgomery for the purpose of accepting public comments regarding the content and implementation of the CAFO regulations.

Every five years, ADEM is required to initiate a public comment period and public hearing to solicit public comments regarding the CAFO regulations. This latest public comment period and public hearing did not involve any proposed changes to the regulations, only an opportunity for the public to have input.

The Department’s summary response to comments, copies of comments received, and a determination of the need, if any, to modify the rules - to ensure continued consistency with the requirements of the Alabama Water Pollution Control Act - will be available to the public via a subsequent public notice.



## ADEM Hosts 31st Annual UST Conference



**A large crowd attended the UST Conference in August**

The Alabama Department of Environmental Management hosted the 31<sup>st</sup> annual Underground Storage Tank Conference in August. ADEM staff and UST industry professionals provided information on Underground Storage Tank regulations and various topics of interest to tank owners and environmental firms who perform assessment and remediation activities at UST sites.

ADEM speakers from the UST Corrective Action Section discussed topics such as submitting applications and obtaining permits, how to stay within ADEM's rules and regulations while operating UST facilities, and also introduced each industry speaker in turn.

Industry professionals spoke of remediation efforts and tools; how to monitor, locate, and remedy possible petroleum leaks, and methods for surface product removal.

ADEM staff, industry professionals, and some environmental firms manned booths during the conference. These booths allowed for networking opportunities during the breaks held throughout the event.

## ADEM Helps Schools System Reduce Emissions

ADEM has partnered with the Albertville City Board of Education to reduce diesel emissions through a school bus replacement project. The project utilizes funding under the Diesel Emission Reduction Act.

While new school buses must meet tougher emission standards established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, many older school buses continue to emit harmful diesel exhaust. Diesel exhaust from these older buses has a negative impact on human health, especially for children who have a faster breathing rate than adults and whose lungs are not yet fully developed. The school system has replaced one of its older diesel school buses with a new, cleaner diesel school bus.

Utilizing its DERA funding, ADEM awarded the Albertville City School System \$36,198 to assist in the purchase of this new, cleaner school bus.



**Albertville's New School Bus**

## Environmental Disaster Response 101



**Fred Leslie conducts a Break to Educate**

"How does the Alabama Department of Environmental Management respond to one of the largest environmental disasters?" That was the question Fred Leslie, Chief of ADEM's Montgomery Field Operations office, aimed to answer recently at his Break-to-Educate presentation.

Speaking to a room of more than 35 ADEM employees, Leslie recounted the aftermath of the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill in 2010, and detailed the response led by the Department, which is still ongoing today through routine sweeps of the Gulf Coast aiming to find tar balls that wash ashore.

In excess of 180 ADEM employees were directly involved with the response and subsequent cleanup efforts along the gulf coast, and more than 60,000 work hours were accumulated (as of June 2013) by ADEM scientists, engineers, and public

relations staff. The spill, which is still the largest marine oil spill in U.S. history, released 134 million gallons of oil into the ocean, with the surface oil-slick measuring an estimated 43,300 square miles. The ruptured and leaking oil well wasn't successfully capped for 87 days.

# 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](http://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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Alabama Department of Environmental Management  
P.O. Box 301463  
Montgomery, AL 36130-1463  
(334) 271-7700  
[www.adem.alabama.gov](http://www.adem.alabama.gov)