

# ADEM UPDATE

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## Pickens County Thanks ADEM



State and local officials held a news conference to announce grants to Pickens County

The Alabama Department of Environmental Management recently announced the awarding of more than \$12 million in grants to repair water and sewer systems in Pickens County.

The money is going to the Town of Gordo, the City of Reform, and the Pickens County Water Authority. It's part of \$473 million in grants and loans that ADEM is awarding to public drinking water and wastewater systems to address outdated, malfunctioning and overwhelmed infrastructure.

Officials in Pickens County recently held a news conference in Carrollton to announce the individual grants and to thank

ADEM for their assistance. State Senator Gerald Allen and State Representative Rodney Sullivan and county and city officials attended the gathering at the Pickens County Judicial Building.

"Many water and sewer systems are in need of repairs and upgrades that they simply cannot afford," said ADEM Director Lance LeFleur. "We are grateful to Governor Kay Ivey and the Alabama Legislature for recognizing those needs and making funding these projects a priority.

"We were pleased to work with city, town, county and water authority officials in Pickens County to help them get the resources they need," said LeFleur.

Gordo was awarded more than \$1.6 million for work on a water well. The town is providing \$325,000 in matching money, bringing the total cost of the project to \$1.99 million. Reform was awarded \$5.5 million to upgrade its water system, and \$1.5 million for sewer work, which includes a new pumping station and repairs, and the Pickens County Water Authority received over \$3.16 million for upgrades to a well and water treatment plant.

In a Special Session last January, the Legislature approved spending \$225 million out of the state's American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to help public water and sewer systems with the greatest infrastructure needs. ADEM has supplemented that with other federal and state funds.

The Department expects to receive more funds over the next five years from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law passed by Congress last year, and is combining that with grants and loans through the State Revolving Fund programs to help water and sewer systems.

ADEM has a webpage - [www.alabamawaterprojects.com](http://www.alabamawaterprojects.com) - that provides information and updates on grant applications and awards. It includes links water and sewer systems that have applied for grants and loans, as well as those systems that already have been awarded funds.

## ADEM Celebrates 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

The Alabama Department of Environmental Management is celebrating its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

ADEM was created in 1982 when the Alabama Legislature consolidated the functions of various commissions, boards, and environmental programs into one organization. Since its creation, ADEM has been instrumental in fostering a cleaner, healthier environment.

Alabama has experienced significant changes during the past 40 years. The overall population has increased to more than five million people, technological advances have improved the quality of life, and economic development has flourished. Meanwhile, the efforts to protect the state's air, land, and water resources have undergone significant changes.

Many more federal environmental regulations - and consequently - more state regulations exist and air and water quality standards are much more stringent. Cleanup standards for soil contamination are much tighter.

Over the years, these changes have resulted in cleaner air and water. Harmful air emissions have declined by 83 percent in Alabama, and 82 percent of the state's water bodies that were previously impaired are now meeting water quality standards. Drinking water quality is among the very highest in the nation. All unlined municipal solid waste landfills have been closed and replaced with state-of-the-art lined landfills. An estimated two-thirds of the old industrial sites in the state have been rehabilitated, and put into productive use.

"These achievements are due in large part to the work of the Department's dedicated, professional staff, our working relationships with community, business, and environmental groups and other agencies," said ADEM Director Lance LeFleur.

"ADEM has also made strides in efficiency by embracing modernization and automation. Despite operating with less employees and a budget that is lower in 'inflation-adjusted' terms, the Department is performing more inspections and scoring higher on objective compliance and enforcement metrics. ADEM is outpacing the rest of the nation in performance."

ADEM is committed to good science, fair and proper processes, and compliance with all applicable environmental laws, rules, and regulations. The Department's mission remains the same as it was when it was created, "to assure a safe, healthful, and productive environment for all Alabamians."

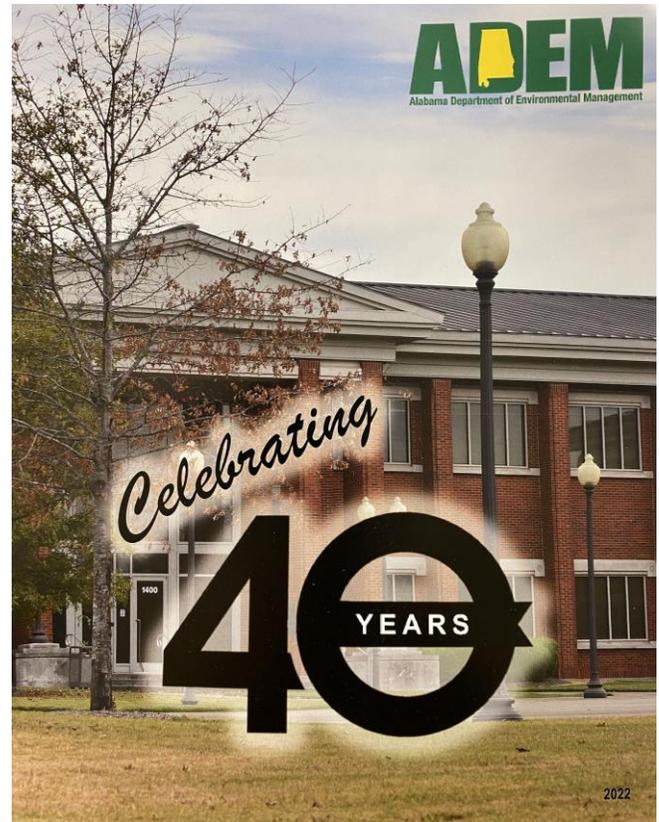
The practice of impartial and ethical execution of responsibilities is unchanged, along with unwavering dedication of ADEM employees to the important work of responsible environmental stewardship.

## Commission Approves Amendments to Regulations

At the regular meeting of the Alabama Environmental Management Commission on December 9, the Commission voted unanimously to approve amendments to ADEM's General Administration Regulations. The amended regulations were designed to modify, remove, and add new forms required for the implementation of the Department's rules and regulations.

ADEM Director Lance LeFleur highlighted many of the Department's accomplishments during his tenure to the Commissioners and to those in attendance, which included a handful of employees who have been with ADEM for 40 years. He also made the Commission and employees aware of a new booklet entitled "Celebrating the 40 Years of ADEM."

In other business, the Commission set the schedule for the six meetings in 2023, and heard presentations from three members on stakeholder groups in relation to environmental issues.



## Air & Waste Update Held in Montgomery

ADEM and the Alabama Chapter of the Air & Waste Management Association hosted more than 125 industry representatives and environmental consultants at the 2022 Air & Waste Regulatory Update in October at the Alabama Activity Center on Dexter Avenue in Downtown Montgomery.

The Department strives to ensure that regulated facilities understand the conditions of their permits, which enhances compliance with federal and state regulations. The conference was designed to update interested parties on air regulations, air quality standards, and enforcement issues.

ADEM officials provided presentations and hosted discussions to exchange information and review important issues. Departmental staff also answered questions related to compliance issues and highlighted how ADEM administers its various programs.

Those in attendance were presented information on topics such as emissions, air quality standards, source testing and electronic test submittals. The conference also featured presentations on environmental justice, recycling, air modeling, technology and updates from ADEM Land and Water Division personnel.

The co-sponsor of the conference, the Air & Waste Management Association (Alabama Chapter) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan professional organization that works to enhance knowledge and expertise by providing a neutral forum for information exchange, professional development, networking opportunities, public education, and outreach. The Association has 100 chapters and strives to promote environmental responsibility and to increase the effectiveness of organizations to make critical decisions that benefit society by offering a series of conferences, workshops, and webinars.



The 2022 Air & Waste Update was held in October in Montgomery

## Public Availability Session Held in Morgan County



More than 75 people attended this session in October

ADEM continues to improve operations to provide more input from the public. The Department has numerous reports, documents, records, and forms available on the Department's website at the click of a computer mouse. ADEM also has events and public hearings designed to give taxpayers increased access to the Department's activities.

To enhance community outreach, the Department continues to conduct public availability sessions to enable people to have interaction with ADEM staff, ask questions, review maps and charts, and express comments and concerns face to face.

In October, ADEM hosted a public availability session in north Alabama. The gathering was held in Lacey's Spring in Morgan County. It was well attended

by more than 75 people including local public officials, business owners, and media representatives.

The public availability session was conducted regarding the proposed issuance of an air permit and the revocation, reissuance, and modification of a NPDES - National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System - permit for North Alabama Materials, Inc. The session allowed people to ask questions and receive information about the dirt mining operation and proposed limestone quarry located in Lacey's Spring. ADEM staff was available at the session and answered numerous questions from those in attendance.

# 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). 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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