

ADEM UPDATE

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ADEM Grant Makes Playground Possible



An ADEM grant helped make this playground possible in Prichard and it's made out of recycled materials."

The construction of the playground was a team effort from start to finish. In addition to ADEM, the sponsors of the project included the United Way of Southwest Alabama, the Make an Impact Foundation, the Mobile County Commission, Mobile County Public Schools, and WALA-Fox10.

The playground features modern versions of classic equipment from climbers, ladders, and slides to spinning carousels. It also has a swerving structure with numerous hand and footholds for kids to choose from as they go from the ground to the second deck of the playground.

"It's great to see the children play and socialize," said ADEM Public Relations Unit Chief, Jerome Hand. "From the dream day planning event to design day where the kids got to plan their own playground, to the grand opening... this has been super. We thank all of those who participated."

"Bottle Cap" Benches Donated by ADEM

As part of a Department-wide recycling initiative, ADEM staff collected bottle caps for a noteworthy project. Six benches, made with this recycled material, were donated to schools, parks, and other areas this past summer and fall.

The benches are now located at Lagoon Park in Montgomery, Heritage House in Africatown, Fort Deposit Park in Lowndes County, Little River Marina in Cedar Bluff, Choccolocco Kayak in Oxford, and Dothan's Landmark Park.

Metal plaques were commissioned for each bench that read: "Made from Recycled Plastics; Donated By: ADEM." The white background and black letters were chosen to stand out from the green bench, and to simulate ADEM's "No Littering, No Dumping" signs that have been posted around Alabama for the past two years.



Six benches were distributed by ADEM

Owens Cross Roads Breaks Ground on New Facility



The city of Owens Cross Roads in Madison County broke ground on a new wastewater treatment plant in November. The new plant will replace the outdated and overwhelmed facility currently in use. It will be constructed next to the old plant on Sneed Avenue.

City, state, and federal officials attended the groundbreaking, including State Representative Ritchie Whorton, State Senator Wes Kitchens, ADEM’s State Revolving Fund Chief Eric Reidy, and a representative from the U.S.

City, state, and federal officials participated in the groundbreaking ceremony

Environmental Protection Agency. Members of the local community were also in attendance.

The Alabama Department of Environmental Management is funding the project with a \$7.3 million grant from the state’s American Rescue Plan Act funds and \$3 million from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law for a total of more than \$10 million. The ARPA funds were allocated to ADEM through the state legislature.

The Clean Water State Revolving Fund and the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund are low interest loan programs intended to finance public infrastructure improvements in Alabama. The programs are funded with a blend of state and federal capitalization funds. ADEM administers the CWSRF and DWSRF, performs the required technical and environmental reviews of projects, and disburses funds to qualified recipients.

ADEM Participates in Air and Waste Conference

The Alabama Department of Environmental Management strives to form working relationships with a wide range of facilities, operators, and employees across the state. To better inform these stakeholders, ADEM regularly holds conferences along with other groups to give updates on the current state of regulatory affairs.

ADEM participated in the 2024 Alabama Air and Waste Regulatory Update in October that was hosted by the Alabama Chapter of the Air and Waste Management Association at the Alabama Activity Center in downtown Montgomery. The one-day conference was designed to update interested parties on air regulations along with highlighting hazardous waste programs and issues.

ADEM Director Lance LeFleur was the first to speak at the conference, and gave a Departmental overview, as well as updates from numerous ADEM programs and projects.

The ADEM Air and Land Divisions were both involved in the event and gave presentations on a number of topics including permitting, compliance, enforcement, and new regulations. The Department works to ensure that regulated facilities understand the conditions of their permits, which enhances compliance with federal and state regulations.

Representatives from other organizations also spoke during the conference. Jason Howanitz, the Principal Air Pollution Control Engineer for the Jefferson County Department of Health, and Darlene Elliot, the Director of the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Management for the City of Huntsville, both gave updates on their respective areas.



ADEM’s Steve Cobb speaks at the Air & Waste Conference

States Work Together to Help Ardmore



Numerous officials were on hand for the check presentation

Alabama and Tennessee officials were joined by leaders from federal and local agencies this fall for a signing ceremony and check presentation of state and federal funding to overhaul Ardmore’s overburdened sewer system, and to replace the wastewater treatment plant.

Representatives from the Alabama Department of Environmental Management, the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency - Region 4, and the city and town of Ardmore gathered at the Ardmore Water Department for the announcement.

Ardmore is located on the Alabama-Tennessee border, and the Ardmore Water Works and Sewer Board serves residents on both sides of the state line. The project, which includes replacing the

wastewater treatment plant, is receiving more than \$22 million in total.

The bulk of the funding, \$19.99 million, to upgrade the sewer system and alleviate problems was awarded by ADEM from the state’s share of American Rescue Plan Act and Bipartisan Infrastructure Law dollars. It includes \$18.679 million for construction and \$1.27 million for planning and development.

“Thanks to federal funding and appropriations by Gov. Kay Ivey and the Legislature, Alabama is making an unprecedented investment in repairing and improving our state drinking water and wastewater infrastructure,” said ADEM Director Lance LeFleur. “We are allocating this funding based on need, and Ardmore and its representatives have clearly demonstrated a need that we are pleased to assist them in meeting.”

For their part, Tennessee officials contributed a total of \$2.5 million that was used to address inflow and infiltration problems. Billy W. Shannon, mayor of Ardmore and chairman of the Ardmore Water Works and Sewer Board, acknowledged the need for the sewer upgrades and praised the multiple officials, states, and agencies involved.

“The addition of our new wastewater treatment facility will greatly help us meet the needs of our residents,” Shannon said. “Without the help from ADEM this project would not have been possible.”

ADEM Employee Receives National Award

The *ADEM UPDATE* would like to congratulate Alex Chavers for winning the first-ever “Golden High Five” award presented by the Association of State Drinking Water Administrators (ASDWA). Mr. Chavers accepted the recognition at ASDWA’s annual Data Management User’s Conference in Alexandria, Virginia, earlier this year.

The award was created to distinguish outstanding individual contributions to the drinking water sector through work and participation in the data community on behalf of the state each person represents.

“This past year, Mr. Chavers exemplified the spirit of the award and established himself as an emerging leader,” said ASDWA Interim Director Anthony R. DeRosa. “Through his involvement in modernization projects, and his valued contributions to the broader data community, Alex demonstrated his expertise, perspectives, and the excellent work he’s doing.”

ASDWA is a professional organization serving state drinking water programs. It was formed in 1984 to address a growing need for state administrators to have national representation, and it has become a respected voice for state primacy agents with Congress, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and other professional organizations in the U.S.



Alex Chavers

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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