



## DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

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**For Immediate Release**

Jan. 19, 2006

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### **Baton Rouge area celebrates one-hour ozone achievement**

BATON ROUGE – The Department of Environmental Quality was joined by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, parish presidents from the Baton Rouge area and others today to celebrate reaching an air-quality milestone. For the first time since federal regulations required it, the area met the one-hour ozone standard.

The representatives from the interested parties were celebrating the success of a collaborative effort of DEQ, EPA, local industries, local governments and community leaders in bringing the five-parish Baton Rouge area into attainment with the 1-hour ozone standard. Although the 1-hour ozone standard was recently replaced by a new 8-hour standard, attainment of the old standard demonstrates air quality improvement in the Baton Rouge area. It also shows efforts to reduce ozone-forming emissions have been successful. Representatives of DEQ, EPA, local governments and industry provided information on air quality in Baton Rouge and demonstrated how the air quality has improved in the past 20 years.

In 2006, there were only four exceedances – one each at monitors in Port Allen, French Settlement, Baker and Grosse Tete. While the state had been narrowing the attainment gap in recent years, continued work and cooperation from a variety of groups helped make the 2006 achievement possible. In 2003 there were 11 exceedances, six in 2004 and five in 2005.

“There have been a lot of people over the past 20 years who have contributed to the decline in ozone levels,” said DEQ Secretary Mike McDaniel. “We’ve seen the number of ozone episodes go down, the design values have gone down and the number of hours for increased ozone levels have also declined. It’s a testament to industry leaders, the ozone action coordinators, the public and DEQ employees who all worked for better air quality.”

“This milestone could not have been reached without the extraordinary efforts of the many people who came together to make clean air a reality,” said EPA Regional Administrator Richard E. Greene. “It marks the first time that the entire state of Louisiana is meeting this important measure and provides great optimism that Baton Rouge is on track to reach the 8-hour standard.”

McDaniel also talked about some of the possible factors that contributed to the 2006 milestone.

The state’s Nitrogen Oxide Rule was fully implemented in 2005 and this led to a decrease in emissions of Nitrogen Oxide, a key ingredient in ozone formation. Also, in 2004, DEQ issued Administrative Orders calling for some local industries to participate in a fence-line-monitoring program. The monitors alerted facilities to large, instantaneous emissions, which were brought under control. Another important factor was the weather. Ozone forms on hot, stagnant days when there is abundant sunshine.