

# NEWS

you can use



Texas Commission on Environmental Quality ♦ MC-113 ♦ PO Box 13087 ♦ Austin, TX 78711-3087

JUNE 2007

## Sign Up Today for Teaching Environmental Sciences

The TCEQ's summer institute for teachers, Teaching Environmental Sciences (TES), is gearing up for this year's courses. TES offers teachers hands-on environmental education that is tuition-paid, field-based, and eligible for graduate-level credit. These 10-day summer courses give teachers knowledge and skills, resource materials, and teaching tools for the classroom. Focusing on air, water, and waste issues, the courses include field trips to industries, municipalities, and landfills, as well as other local, environmentally sensitive sites. Also included are presentations by guest speakers and scientific experts, with an emphasis on pollution prevention. Presentations cover water testing, composting, xeriscaping, and recycling, along with many other activities. Teachers connect with their local communities, gain an array of free materials that are ready for classroom use, and receive ideas and contact information for student field trips and speakers.



### Locations and contacts for this summer's classes:

- Lamar University–Beaumont, June 18–29  
Dr. James Westgate: [james.westgate@lamar.edu](mailto:james.westgate@lamar.edu)
- West Texas A & M–Canyon, July 9–20  
Dr. William Rogers: [jrogers@mail.wtamu.edu](mailto:jrogers@mail.wtamu.edu)
- Stephen F. Austin State Univ.–Nacogdoches, June 18–July 2  
Dr. Alan Sowards: [asowards@sfasu.edu](mailto:asowards@sfasu.edu)
- Texas State University–San Marcos, June 18–29  
Dr. Richard Earl: [re02@txstate.edu](mailto:re02@txstate.edu)
- University of Texas Permian Basin–Odessa, schedule pending  
Dr. Seyf Ehdaie: [ehdaie\\_s@utpb.edu](mailto:ehdaie_s@utpb.edu)
- Texas A & M–Texarkana, June 22–July 5  
Dr. David Allard: [david.allard@tamut.edu](mailto:david.allard@tamut.edu)
- University of Texas–Pan American, July 12–27  
Dr. Amin Ibrahim: [amin@panam.edu](mailto:amin@panam.edu)

## TCEQ Recognizes Leaders in Environmental Protection

Five sites have achieved the state's highest levels of environmental performance through their participation in the Clean Texas program. The TCEQ recognized these five sites for their achievements as Clean Texas Gold and Platinum Level members on May 2 during the keynote luncheon at the Environmental Trade Fair and Conference in Austin. Clean Texas is the state's voluntary environmental leadership program that encourages and recognizes enhanced environmental performance throughout Texas. Organizations join Clean Texas for a three-year period at one of four membership levels—Bronze, Silver, Gold, and the highest level, Platinum.

To receive approval at the program's highest levels, Gold and Platinum, organizations must implement a performance-based environmental management system and demonstrate environmental performance that goes beyond compliance with environmental laws. Gold and Platinum members are eligible for regulatory benefits such as expedited permitting, an improved compliance-history score, and assistance with innovative projects.

The new Gold and Platinum members, their locations, and brief descriptions of their commitments are listed below.

### Platinum Level Members

#### **General Motors Assembly Plant, Arlington**

General Motors (GM) Arlington demonstrates its commitment to incorporating sound environmental practices into business decisions. GM uses compressed-gas technology to eliminate the need for more than 45 tons of sodium azide, a toxic component of airbag systems. Additionally, GM has reduced non-recycled waste by over 20 percent and air emissions by more than 5 percent. GM Arlington also participates in several public service projects by supporting nonprofit environmental education organizations such as River Legacy, providing input to environmental rule making efforts, and participating in city council committees. GM also plans to launch two hybrid passenger vehicles that will help reduce air emissions.

#### **Louisiana Pacific OSB Plant, Carthage**

Louisiana Pacific OSB Plant (LP) in Carthage made numerous equipment upgrades that have created a great effect. LP replaced a process that used thermal oxidizing equipment with a process that uses catalytic oxidizing equipment, reduc-



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ing its energy needs by 60 percent. Another project is helping to save 20,000 tons of lumber per year by reusing sawdust and trimmings. Previously, the sawdust material was used solely for combustion. A new technology allows the material to be used for core-board production and turns “trash into treasure.” LP employees also serve the community by adopting local highways, collecting more than a ton of trash in a single event.

### **Gold Level Members**

#### **Lone Star Infrastructure, Pflugerville**

With close to 50 miles of new highway to develop on the State Highway 130 (SH 130) project, Lone Star Infrastructure (LSI) estimated buying more than 1 million tons of construction material. To reduce the amount of virgin-mined material needed for the project, LSI negotiated to recycle the asphalt runways at the retired Mueller Airport in Austin and reuse them in the form of recycled asphalt pavement. This reduced the amount of virgin-mined material by more than 250,000 tons, and also reduced the amount of material sent to a landfill.

In cooperation with Bat Conservation International (BCI), LSI installed eight bat lodges in four separate locations on the SH 130 project. Each bat lodge can hold up to 5,000 bats and can collectively house up to 40,000 bats. In addition, LSI partnered with Popham Elementary School to relocate numerous mature shade trees from the SH 130 right of way to the school’s campus.

#### **Chevron Phillips Chemical Plant, Orange**

Chevron Phillips (CP) works to reduce waste generation with special projects that minimize what is sent to the landfill. CP uses a process in which hexavalent chromium is treated and reduced from a hazardous waste to a less-hazardous Class II waste. To meet commitments to conserve water and reduce hazardous air pollutant emissions, CP filters and recycles process rinse water, and improves detection and maintenance of potential leaking valves. CP employees help meet community environmental needs by participating in the Adopt-a-Highway program and conducting recycling lessons for local elementary schools.

#### **Austin Energy’s Decker Creek Power Station, Austin**

Capable of producing 930 megawatts of electricity, Austin Energy’s Decker Creek Power Station entered into the Clean Texas program in 2002, and while energy demands may have increased, Decker has managed to decrease nitrogen oxide (NOx) emissions by 138 tons. These reductions were achieved through burner retrofits and the addition of a water injection system. In 2006, Decker Creek Power Station reduced sulfuric acid waste by 62,000 pounds, a 72 percent decrease. The waste reductions were achieved through an optimization of process-water demineralization and pretreatment systems. Decker Creek Power Station also eliminated 6,000 pounds of asbestos from the facility in an effort to protect worker health.

For more information about Clean Texas, visit the Clean Texas web site at [www.cleantexas.org](http://www.cleantexas.org) or contact the TCEQ Small Business and Environmental Assistance Division at 512-239-3100.

## **Keep Texas Beautiful Conference Celebrates 40 Years**

Plan to attend this year’s Keep Texas Beautiful Conference on July 10–13, held at the Westin Riverwalk in San Antonio. The four-day conference offers more than 20 environmental educational



sessions, features energetic keynote speakers, and honors the Governor’s Community Achievement Award and Keep Texas Beautiful Award winners. This year’s conference will celebrate 40 years of Keep Texas Beautiful! For more information and to register, visit [www.ktb.org](http://www.ktb.org) or call 1-800-CLEAN-TX.

### **June EMS Forum Highlights Benefits**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 6, in cooperation with the North Central Texas Council of Governments, the TCEQ, and the City of Dallas will host an “EMS Forum for Local Governments” to introduce benefits of implementing an environmental management system (EMS) in your community. Experts from Texas and across the country will gather in Dallas to speak about environmental management systems, regulatory and financial incentives to implement a system, and lessons learned along the way.

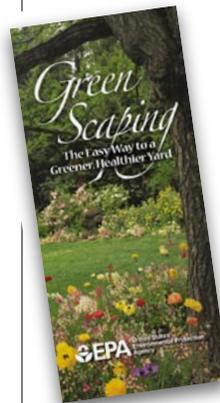
The forum is set for June 26–28 at the Dallas City Hall, 1500 Marilla Street, L1 Auditorium, in Dallas. Registration, hotel, and logistical information are available at [www.nctcog.org/envir/SEEClean/EMS/events.asp](http://www.nctcog.org/envir/SEEClean/EMS/events.asp).

### **How Healthy is Your Soil?**

Our yards can be great spaces for fun and relaxation, as well as places of beauty. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has developed a “how to” guide for preparing the soil, selecting and planting the right plants, conserving water, reducing yard waste, and using holistic approaches to manage pests. **GreenScaping: The Easy Way to a Greener, Healthier Yard** describes a set of landscaping practices that can improve the health and appearance of homeowners’ lawns and gardens. By following the

brochure’s five easy steps, you can have a great-looking yard that’s easier to care for, cheaper to maintain, and healthier for families, pets, wildlife, and the environment.

For more information, visit the GreenScapes web page at [www.epa.gov/greenscapes](http://www.epa.gov/greenscapes) or to view the brochure online, visit <http://epa.gov/oppfeed1/Publications/catalog/greenscaping.pdf>. To order free copies of the **GreenScaping** brochure (EPA530-K-06-002), contact the National Service Center for Environmental Publications at [www.epa.gov/epaoswer/osw/pub-n](http://www.epa.gov/epaoswer/osw/pub-n) or by e-mail at [ncepima@one.net](mailto:ncepima@one.net).



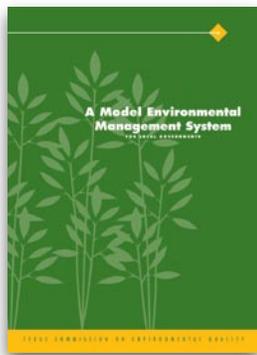
## Featured TCEQ publications

Red tides, or harmful algal blooms, occur worldwide. In Texas, red tides are caused by high concentrations of microscopic algae called *Karenia brevis*, which can cause water to appear red, light or dark green, or brown. To find out more about recognizing and reporting it, order a copy of **Red Tide Facts** (GI-367), a brochure describing the harmful effects of red tide in the Gulf of Mexico that includes safety tips for eating seafood. To view the brochure online, visit [www.tceq.state.tx.us/comm\\_exec/forms\\_pubs/pubs/gi/gi-367.html](http://www.tceq.state.tx.us/comm_exec/forms_pubs/pubs/gi/gi-367.html).



**Do You Want to Make an Environmental Complaint? Do You Have Information or Evidence?** (GI-278). This pamphlet describes the process for reporting an environmental problem, outlines who to contact, and how to submit the information. To view the pamphlet, visit [www.tceq.state.tx.us/comm\\_exec/forms\\_pubs/pubs/gi/gi-278\\_2085995.pdf](http://www.tceq.state.tx.us/comm_exec/forms_pubs/pubs/gi/gi-278_2085995.pdf).

**A Model Environmental Management System** (RG-437) guides local governments on how to develop an environmental management system (EMS). It creates step-by-step processes and procedures that allow an organization to analyze, control, and reduce the environmental effect of its activities, products, and services. You also will learn about the TCEQ's benefits and regulatory incentives available to those who choose to have their systems evaluated and certified.



To view this guide, visit [www.tceq.state.tx.us/comm\\_exec/forms\\_pubs/pubs/rg/rg-437\\_1990976.pdf](http://www.tceq.state.tx.us/comm_exec/forms_pubs/pubs/rg/rg-437_1990976.pdf). For more information about the EMS program, e-mail [ems@tceq.state.tx.us](mailto:ems@tceq.state.tx.us).

The TCEQ now offers the public a way to view an electronic version of the backup materials provided by the chief clerk to the commission for its consideration at agenda meetings. e-Agenda, (GI-368) also explains how parties can upload their filings to the TCEQ web site. For more information, visit [www.tceq.state.tx.us/comm\\_exec/forms\\_pubs/pubs/gi/gi-368.html](http://www.tceq.state.tx.us/comm_exec/forms_pubs/pubs/gi/gi-368.html).

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**Sign up for e-mail updates.** 

## Take Care of Texas Tip



### Turn Off the Lights

By turning off lights when not needed, you can reduce your energy consumption and help reduce air emissions. Not using four 60-watt incandescent light bulbs for two hours a day can also save about \$15 a year.



[www.takecareoftexas.org](http://www.takecareoftexas.org)

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