

Ralph Marquez Receives the Gregg A. Cooke Award

One of the highlights of this year's Texas Environmental Excellence Awards was the announcement of the second annual Gregg A. Cooke Memorial Award for Exceptional Environmental Excellence. The proclamation, which was kept a guarded secret, was awarded to former TCEQ Commissioner Ralph Marquez, who was overwhelmed by not only the announcement, but by a prelude video on his life and accomplishments. Marquez served the agency for 11 years (1996-2007), and to date has been the longest serving commissioner in the history of the agency. He was born and raised in Havana, Cuba, until he came to the United States to attend The University of Texas.

The award is named for the late Gregg A. Cooke, a former director of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 6 in Dallas. Cooke was a long-time partner with the TCEQ during his many years of service there. According to Rose Churchill, Marquez's daughter, "He really respected Gregg... they were working for a cause that really meant a lot to them." She also said her father, "...accepted the position... not for his own personal gain..." but out of a passion and desire to help people.

To learn more about Commissioner Marquez and to view the complete video, visit www.teea.org.



Pollution Prevention Grant Establishes a Regional Partnership

The TCEQ's Small Business and Environmental Assistance Division received a grant for a two-year, pollution prevention project in the Dallas-Fort Worth region.

Region 6 of the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) awarded the grant to establish a regional partnership, have partners identify key issues in the area, then set goals and select projects to address those issues, and to document the benefits and reduced environmental impacts resulting from the partners' activities.

The Dallas-Fort Worth region was selected because numerous companies and public entities are currently participating in one or more TCEQ or EPA voluntary programs. Initially, members of TCEQ's Clean Texas Program, EPA's National Performance Track Program, the North Central Texas Environmental Management System Working Group, and EPA's Blue Skyways Partners will be invited to participate as regional partners.

In the first phase, which began March 26, 2008, the TCEQ and contractor Culture Technologies, Inc. will conduct a series of facilitated meetings and workshops where participants receive help using an environmental management system to select priority issues they identified, set environmental improvement goals, and identify projects that address those issues.

In the second phase (September 1, 2008, through August 31, 2009), the TCEQ and a contractor will work with participants to measure and document improvements in environmental performance, document the benefits, and develop and publish case studies and success stories resulting from those activities.

To participate in the project or get more information about it, contact Bob Gifford, TCEQ, Small Business and Environmental Assistance, by phone at 512-239-3149 or by e-mail at rgifford@tceq.state.tx.us.

Upcoming TCEQ Workshops and Conferences

Find other training opportunities on the TCEQ Web site at www.tceq.state.tx.us/assistance/events/trainingevents.html.

Wastewater Record Keeping and Reporting Workshop

This workshop will cover record-keeping and reporting requirements for domestic minor wastewater treatment plants.

Location: Hill College, Lecture Hall in the Library, Hillsboro

Date: June 24

Location: Killeen Community Center, Killeen

Date: June 25

For more information and how to register, visit www.tceq.state.tx.us/assistance/sblga/wastewtr_wkshops.html.

Public Drinking Water Conference

The TCEQ is offering for free, a two-day seminar for up-to-date information about operating public drinking water systems and water utilities in Texas.

Location: Doubletree Hotel Austin

Date: August 18-19

For more information, visit www.tceq.state.tx.us/permitting/water_supply/pdw/conference.html.

Dam Safety Workshop for Owners and Operators

Co-sponsored with the Association of State Dam Safety Officials, the TCEQ is offering owners and operators of dams three one-day workshops. TCEQ staff will present practical and straightforward information on issues that affect anyone who owns or operates a dam.

Location: Sutton County 4-H Civic Center, Sonora, Texas

Date: June 25

Location: Osage Surface Water Treatment Plant, Amarillo, Texas

Date: July 23

Location: McKinney City Hall, McKinney

Date: August 13

For more information about the workshops and how to register, visit www.tceq.state.tx.us/files/dam-safety_workshop2008.pdf_4296034.pdf.

Sanitary Sewer Overflow Initiative Workshops

These free, one-day workshops will provide practical and straightforward information to municipalities that operate and maintain wastewater collection systems.

Location: UT Arlington Campus, Arlington

Date: June 24,

Location: Martin Luther King Community Center, Midland

Date: July 10

Location: Water Utilities Service Center, Beaumont

Date: July 17

Location: City of Waco Water Utility Billing Office Conference Room, Waco

Date: July 29

Location: Water Utilities Administration Building, Corpus Christi

Date: July 31

For information on how to register, visit www.tceq.state.tx.us/assets/public/admin/calendar/jun_2008_calendar.html.

Do you collect lab data for or submit it to the TCEQ?

After June 30, 2008, the TCEQ will accept lab data only if it is generated by labs accredited by the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference. There are some exceptions. To find out more about this new requirement and the exceptions, visit our Web site at www.tceq.state.tx.us/agency/nelac.html.

Highlighted TCEQ publications

Volunteer to Lend a Helping Hand as an EnviroMentor (GI-292) is a brochure describing how environmental professionals can help small businesses and local governments comply with environmental regulations by serving as EnviroMentors. The program has had a very successful year, and has nearly 100 volunteers. Currently, there is a need for Spanish-speaking individuals who can help small businesses (such as auto body and auto repair) with environmental regulations, especially storm water permits.

If you are with a small business or a local government that is regulated by environmental laws, you can receive free, confidential assistance from environmental professionals through the EnviroMentor Program. For more information, order a copy of **Get a Helping Hand from an EnviroMentor (GI -293)**.

For more information about the TCEQ program, visit www.tceq.state.tx.us/assistance/sblga/envimnt.html.

The TCEQ Compliance Commitment Program (GI-291) is a brochure for small businesses and local governments outlining the TCEQ program offering free, confidential site visits to identify compliance issues. Participating in the C2 Program could help you qualify for a one-year exemption from scheduled TCEQ inspections.

Do Your Part! Take Care of Texas in Your Office (GI-388) offers 20 environmental tips for improving air and water quality, conserving water and energy, and reducing waste at the office.

To order any of the above publications, visit www.tceq.state.tx.us/publications.

Take Care of Texas Tip

Install Low-Flow Showerheads and Faucet Aerators

Installing a low-flow showerhead can be the single most effective water-saving step that you can take inside your home—reducing water consumption by 25 to 60 percent and saving up to \$145 each year on energy costs. A faucet aerator can cut water consumption in half.



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