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Office of Air Quality Releases Annual State of the Air Report

NORTH LITTLE ROCK—Arkansas Energy & Environment’s (E&E) Office of Air Quality (OAQ) has released its annual “State of the Air” report for the public to view online. The report presents data about the air quality in Arkansas and achievements in OAQ program implementation during federal fiscal year (FFY) 2020.

OAQ is responsible for meeting Arkansas’s federal obligations under the Clean Air Act, and protecting air quality to enhance the lives and health of all Arkansans and visitors to the state. Our clean air is not only a benefit for the health of all Arkansans, but also important for preserving the great outdoors in a state that cherishes hunting, hiking, fishing, and other recreational activities. Two of our state’s largest economic sectors, agriculture and tourism, benefit from the long-term improvements in air quality that are reflected in the report.

“The air we breathe is one of our greatest natural resources. In Arkansas, we are fortunate to enjoy outstanding air quality,” said E&E’s Chief Administrator for the Environment Julie Linck. “We are meeting all health-based standards for air quality throughout the state, and reduced pollution is resulting in visibility improvement at our scenic wilderness areas.”

At a time of improving air quality, OAQ also has realized greater efficiencies in its permitting program. Arkansas remains among the top states in the nation in timeliness for processing Title V Permit renewals and significant modification permit actions. In FFY 2020, permit engineers acted on 96 minor source permit applications and 184 Title V permit applications.

Also during FFY 2020, OAQ inspectors continued to safely perform both complaint inspections and routine inspections consistent with health guidelines and the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) goals for inspections.

“Arkansans can feel assured that OAQ inspectors remained vigilant and responsive to the needs of the public in FFY 2020,” said OAQ Associate Director Will Montgomery. “Permit engineers continued to issue timely and technically sound permits. This included quick action to ensure that facilities that pivoted to the production of hand sanitizer were able to do so rapidly.”

Funds awarded to public entities also are highlighted in the report. The Arkansas Department of Transportation received \$1,109,790 toward the replacement of seven diesel-powered trucks, and \$337,012 was awarded to schools across the state to replace aging buses with newer, cleaner buses. These replacements are expected to yield a total reduction of 1033 tons of air pollutant emissions.

OAQ encourages Arkansans to stay informed about air quality and to learn more about how our individual actions can improve air quality every day. To learn more about Arkansas’s air quality and to view the “State of the Air” report, visit: <https://www.adeg.state.ar.us/air/state-of-air/>.

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