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Arkansas Environmental Personnel Moves: Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality Senior Manager Joe Hoover (Petroleum Tanks Program and Enforcement – Office of Land Resources) Retiring



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09/28/2016

Mr. Joe Hoover of the Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality (“ADEQ”) announced that he will retire on September 30th.

Joe is the Senior Manager, Petroleum Tanks Program and Enforcement, Office of Land Resources.

Joe is probably better known as a long-time Chief of the Regulated Storage Tank Division (“RSTD”). RSTD became part of the Office of Land Resources in ADEQ’s recent reorganization. Nevertheless, his duties still included managing the agency programs addressing petroleum underground storage tanks (“USTs”).

Many veteran members of the regulated community will remember that Joe spent many years in the Hazardous Waste Division. He began at the agency in 1990 as a hazardous waste inspector and held a number of branch manager positions within what was formerly known as the Hazardous Waste Division. The Hazardous Waste Division of course included the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (“RCRA”) Subtitle C program. Implementation, enforcement, and permitting of RCRA regulated facilities was a complex task at that point in time because of the program’s recent creation and the vast universe of facilities affected.

Joe was selected as Chief of RSTD in 2004 after the retirement of Jim Shell. This division is arguably somewhat unique in the agency because it is one of the few environmental regulatory programs that has potential significant impact on both service and small businesses. In addition, besides its role in enforcement of the UST regulations, the division serves a critical function in the operation of the Arkansas Petroleum Storage Tank Trust Fund ("Trust Fund").

The Trust Fund was enacted in the late 1980s by the Arkansas General Assembly to serve as the financial assurance mechanism for thousands of Arkansas UST owners and operators. In the absence of the Trust Fund, UST owners and operators would have attempted to obtain insurance that was either unavailable or unaffordable. It is especially important in a rural state such as Arkansas to ensure to the extent possible that businesses supplying motor fuel in such areas have some ability to continue to operate.

I believe that I can speak for organizations such as the Arkansas Oil Marketers Association and other individual companies with whom I regularly work that they have very much appreciated Joe's efforts supervising the various RSTD programs. He has always been accessible and, while opinions have sometimes differed on particular issues, there was typically room for compromise and practical solutions. Further, there has never been any doubt that Arkansas has always been viewed as an exemplary delegated UST state and one of those states for which a trust fund has been consistently considered viable from both a financial and operating standpoint.

I know that Joe has been missed (he had to take medical leave for a significant back issue in June) and his absence will be felt in the future.

As of this writing, I believe veteran RSTD staffer Lynda Perry has been serving as acting Senior Manager in Joe's absence.