



State of Louisiana

Governor's Office of Homeland Security
and
Emergency Preparedness

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

August 15, 2012

MEDIA CONTACT:

Christina Stephens
christina.stephens@la.gov
225-358-5667

State Agencies Ramping Up Around-the-Clock Operations in Bayou Corne to Oversee Drilling of Texas Brine Exploratory Well

PIERRE PART, La. – State agencies are stepping up their around-the-clock operations this evening near Bayou Corne as Texas Brine begins drilling the well casing for its exploratory well near the sinkhole that formed near its underground salt cavern a few weeks ago.

Officials from the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness, Louisiana State Police, the Department of Natural Resources and the Department of Environmental Quality will provide oversight of the drilling process 24 hours a day, seven days a week for the duration of the drilling.

Louisiana State Police will be relocating its Forward Command Post later this evening to monitor the operations. LSP's Hazmat Unit has increased staffing levels to provide 24-hour operational support throughout the process. The Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality also will be monitoring the air quality in the area around the clock.

NATURAL RESOURCES

The Department of Natural Resources' Office of Conservation staff is monitoring all activity on the site of Texas Brine's investigatory well to make sure the company is complying with all safety standards and the rules for proper drilling, well construction and well control. DNR has an agent on site 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

DNR continues to review files and reports from all hydrocarbon storage and brine cavern wells and associated caverns for Napoleonville Salt Dome and the daily activity and planned activity reports that Napoleonville Salt Dome cavern operators, which are being provided in accordance with DNR's emergency order from August 3.

DNR staff continues to coordinate with the science advisory team to look at all data and to investigate alternative sources of natural gas bubbling and subsidence. The science advisory team is working on confirming existing theories, determining methods for testing theories and developing alternative ideas and approaches. DNR is also working with DEQ in reviewing analytical results of water samples from water wells screened in Mississippi River Alluvial aquifer.

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

DEQ continues its monitoring and sampling for naturally occurring radioactive materials (NORM) with no dangerous readings to date. Ongoing water quality monitoring in the bayou indicates no water pollution associated with the incident to date.

TRANSPORTATION

The Department of Transportation continues its monitoring of the roads in the area and, at this time, has no concerns related to the integrity of its state roads, specifically La. 70 in Assumption parish. DOTD would like to remind motorists to practice caution while driving on La. 70 in Assumption Parish, as there may be heavy truck traffic entering and exiting the roadway.

Out of an abundance of caution, DOTD engineers are continuously monitoring the state road system in this area -- 24 hours a day with roving patrols and frequent surveys. If conditions change, DOTD crews are prepared to close roads immediately to ensure public safety and will announce appropriate detours.

DOTD crews are finalizing the control network or study area by tying topographic points together. This data will be processed and compiled for establishing the baseline of the study area.

DOTD engineers are measuring elevation levels weekly using GPS technology at four locations along La. 70 - one on Highway 70 perpendicular to the site, and at the Bayou Choupique, Grand Bayou and Bayou Corne bridges. So far, no changes in elevation have been found at these locations.

ONLINE RESOURCES

Local and state agencies are posting information and testing results online. Today, GOHSEP posted an updated situational brief and operational summary online.

GOHSEP:

<http://gohsep.la.gov/>

Assumption parish:

<http://assumptionla.com/bayoucorne>

Department of Natural Resources:

<http://dnr.louisiana.gov/index.cfm?md=pagebuilder&tmp=home&pid=939&pnid=0&nid=172>

Department of Environmental Quality:

<http://www.deq.louisiana.gov/portal/bayoucorne.aspx>

###