

# The St. Bernard Voice

ESTABLISHED JANUARY 11, 1890

"DUM VIVIMUS, VIVAMUS, LABORE ET HONORE"

EDWIN M. ROY, JR., Editor and Publisher

VOL. 116 - NO. 16

ARABI, LA., FRIDAY, APRIL 29, 2005

THIRTY CENTS

## Odinet, Rodriguez Cut Ribbon At Air Monitoring Ceremony

On Thursday, April 21, St. Bernard Parish and state officials, community members, public health advocates and church representatives cut the ribbon on the state's first-ever real time air monitor. The Chalmette Air Monitoring Project's mission is to detect toxic and carcinogenic chemicals 24 hours a day, seven days a week at its website, [airmonitorchalmette.com](http://airmonitorchalmette.com). "This is a long time coming," said Ken Ford, President of the St. Bernard Citizens for Environmental Quality. "I

### Ribbon Cutting

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ExxonMobil was found to have violated the Clean Air Act on 34 separate occasions. In a court ruling, it was found that Clean Air Act violations are likely to continue. "Plaintiffs have alleged, and the documented violations indicate, that Chalmette repeatedly violates the Clean Air Act and that, unless some action is taken to prevent the illegal conduct, there is a real threat that such violations will continue to occur."

The monitor being used – called the Sentry – has been programmed to monitor for six chemicals – called the Sickly Six – that the St. Bernard Citizens for Environmental Quality have detected in their bucket air samples over the last two years.

am concerned for my health, for the health of my family and the school-children in the area."

"We have raised thousands of dollars to do what ExxonMobil should be doing," said Anne Rolfes, Director of the Louisiana Bucket Brigade. "Exxon made \$25.3 billion in profit last year. Spend some of that in St. Bernard Parish."

"The situation in Chalmette has become especially serious since

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Among the Sickly Six chemicals are carcinogens, respiratory irritants, and developmental and reproductive toxins.

The Chalmette Air Monitoring Project includes a program to educate the people of St. Bernard Parish about the results of the real time air monitoring, the importance of monitoring, and the implications of the Sickly Six. "Residents of the parish have for years complained about odors and fumes from the refineries into their neighborhoods. "We have so many bad odors from the refineries, and so many respiratory problems and cancers around here," said Johnny Lewis. "We just want to know why."

Despite the millions of pounds of carcinogens and toxics that industry releases into the air, government and industry are not taking the

## DEQ Begins Chalmette Air Monitoring Project

The Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality recently installed a new air-toxic monitor in the Chalmette area. This monitor will take samples of and analyze 59 air toxics and the precursors to ozone.

The monitoring results will provide DEQ with detailed information about the air quality in the area. Using the most up-to-date scientific methods, this information will be validated by a state certified laboratory to be accurate and scientifically sound.

Louisiana has developed a more comprehensive air-monitoring system than 47 other states. This system allows DEQ to monitor more

than 100 air toxics, which is higher than the federal regulations require.

DEQ has more than 40 air monitoring sites around the state. Of these, 16 monitor air toxics such as benzene, vinyl chloride, MTBE, ethylene dichloride and ozone precursors. To find out more about these monitors and their locations go to <http://www.deq.louisiana.gov/evaluation/airmon/airsites/statemap.htm>.

The Chalmette monitor is scheduled to be active for at least 12 months. However, if the readings are close to, or exceed, Louisiana's air-toxic standards, the monitoring will continue.



Parish President HENRY 'JUNIOR' RODRIGUEZ, JR. and State Representative KENNETH ODINET share a light moment while waiting to cut the ribbon at Louisiana's first real-time air monitor.

steps necessary to protect the public from these emissions. Though the Department of Environmental Quality recently installed an air monitor across the street from ExxonMobil, it takes a reading only every six days. These monitors also average the spikes of harmful exposure over a 24 hour period, thereby minimizing the health threats and making it impossible to know the source of the problem.

"Real-time air monitors are a money saving device for refinery managers," said Denny Larson of the National Refinery Reform Campaign. "Managers can use precise information to identify the source of the releases so they can keep their product in the refinery and sell it at a profit."

It is claimed that refineries around the country have used the

technology to their benefit. The Senate that would require companies in the parish that are in violation of the Clean Air Act, to install such new monitoring equipment.

workers and homeland security officials to community members and emergency workers. Air monitoring can help first responders – those responsible for responding to a spill or a release – to understand what exactly was released and how to protect themselves and the community.

At the ribbon cutting ceremony, elected officials, including St. Bernard Parish President Henry "Junior" Rodriguez, Parish Council Chairman Joseph Difatta, and State Rep. Ken Odinet, D-Arabi, expressed their support for asking the refinery to buy such air monitoring equipment for fence-line monitoring and make the results available to the public. "I think it would be in their own best interest to do that," stated Rodriguez. State Rep. Odinet has introduced a bill in the Legisla-

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