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## **ADEQ Director Owens Dedicates Remediation System to Clean Up Contaminated Groundwater Near Quartzsite**

QUARTZSITE (March 7, 2008) -- Arizona Department of Environmental Quality Director Steve Owens officially dedicated the Main Street and Kofa Remediation System to clean up groundwater contamination in the Quartzsite area, calling the project "vital" to protecting the community's water resources for the future.

"We are committed to protecting the people of La Paz County and Western Arizona when polluters contaminate our precious land and water resources," said Director Owens during festivities celebrating the recent opening of the water treatment plant.

The 15-acre Kofa and Main Street site, located at 965 W. Main Street in Quartzsite, was once the location of Ted's Truck Stop, which had two large refueling areas and a total of eight storage tanks on the site for nearly a quarter of a century, ending in 1998.

In 2000, ADEQ was notified that water from a private well near the site had a gasoline odor and about 20 private wells in the area were sampled. When elevated levels of benzene were found above the state standard of 5 micrograms per liter, further wells were drilled on site and testing was performed.

Those tests discovered widespread petroleum hydrocarbon contamination in the groundwater across the entire site. In addition to elevated levels of benzene, free product consisting of diesel and gasoline were detected in four wells on site. Further groundwater monitoring also showed that benzene had migrated off the property and a benzene plume now extends about one-fourth mile off the site to the north and northeast. While no current drinking water supplies are affected, the plume, if unremediated, could potentially impact wells in the area that are used for irrigation and other purposes.

ADEQ began construction of the soil and groundwater remediation system last September and turned it on in December. As of March 1, more than 27,000 pounds of hydrocarbon and 820 pounds of benzene had been removed from the soil. Soil remediation is expected to take more than a year at the site and the water cleanup is expected to last at least 10 years.

Owens said that the site is the state's largest petroleum remediation system, and it marks the first time that ADEQ's State Superfund program, the Water Quality Assurance Revolving Fund (WQARF), and the department's Underground Storage Tank (UST) programs have worked together on a joint project.

"Because of the importance of this site, we have developed this first-of-its-kind effort to ensure that there will be adequate funding to clean up this contamination," Owens announced.