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ADEQ Announces that 75 percent of Federal Stimulus Funds for cleaning up Leaking Storage Tanks at use in field

PHOENIX – (Dec. 22, 2009) – Arizona Department of Environmental Quality officials announced today that an impressive 75 percent of funding provided through the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act of 2009 to clean up leaking underground storage tank (LUST) sites throughout the state is already being used for ongoing projects.

Since receiving more than \$3.2 million of ARRA funds through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in July 2009, ADEQ has entered contracts with 11 private contract firms to clean up petroleum contamination at 24 sites.

LUST sites that are being cleaned up using ARRA funds are located primarily in rural parts of Arizona, including old gasoline service stations or other businesses in Prescott, Holbrook, Parker, Willcox, Dewey-Humboldt, Coolidge, Safford, Winslow, Globe, Williams, Wellton, and Somerton, the communities of Clay Springs, Greer, Sonoita and Truxton, and a school in Yuma.

“This funding and the program are significant because not only do they allow ADEQ to further protect human health and the environment for the people in Arizona, they also provide for revitalization of communities and increased property values,” said ADEQ Director Benjamin H. Grumbles. “We also recognize the need to quickly and wisely utilize the federal stimulus dollars for their intended purpose and we have made significant progress toward that goal.”

“EPA is extremely pleased with ADEQ's efforts to work with us to speed environmental cleanups that support jobs and economic development,” said Jeff Scott, director of the Waste Management Division for EPA's Region 9 in San Francisco.

The majority of the LUST sites where ARRA funds are being used have no known or financially viable owner. The work activities include removing old underground storage tanks at sites with suspected contamination and cleaning up soil and groundwater impacted by gasoline or diesel contamination.

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12/22/2009

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"The stimulus money has helped us continue to clean up sites and keep people employed," said Phil Lagas, vice president of Brown and Caldwell, an Arizona environmental consulting firm. "A lot of companies had technical staff dedicated to these LUST projects and it was very difficult when State revenue shortfalls caused the contracts to be suspended on very short notice. After the stimulus money came through, we were able to restart several cleanup projects and keep five people employed that otherwise would have lost their jobs."

LUST cleanups are expected to continue through September 2011. For more information on ADEQ's implementation of the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act of 2009, visit <http://www.azdeq.gov/recovery/index.html>

For more information on Governor Brewer's Office of Economic Recovery and all ARRA activities in Arizona, visit <http://az.gov/recovery/>

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