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ADEQ Issues First “Stop-Use Order” Because of Leaking Gasoline Tanks that affect Health, Environment in Snowflake

PHOENIX (March 22, 2012) – The Arizona Department of Environmental Quality has issued its first “stop-use order” for leaking underground storage tanks that are potentially threatening the public health and environment in the Town of Snowflake.

“Although we normally attempt to work these issues out with companies, this case was severe and made it necessary to use this enhanced enforcement tool,” said ADEQ Director Henry Darwin.

Last Friday, ADEQ inspectors placed stop-use tags on the operation of five underground storage tanks owned by Milton Capital LLC at One Stop 2 convenience mart, located at 379 S. Main Street in Snowflake.

Milton Capital LLC had a 1,200-gallon gasoline release from one of the tanks at the site in late February. That release resulted in the mobilization of emergency personnel and the evacuation of an adjacent apartment complex and restaurant, both of which remain closed.

The fuel dispenser at the site had been illegally re-engineered before the February release and an emergency stop button no longer was tied to the tanks system. A fuel delivery driver accidentally filled one of the tanks because the operator also failed to label the tanks as required by Arizona Department of Weights and Measures regulations. The driver was unable to stop the pumping process because the emergency stop button was not properly connected.

The entire contents of the tank were emptied into the sump which resulted in flow across the ground surface and through the soil under the pavement. ADEQ issued a notice of violation to Milton Capital for failure to comply with a number of statutes including notification, line testing, financial responsibility and failing to permanently close tanks.

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