

***EPA Region 6 Environmental Justice Forum - Speaker Biographies***  
***June 12 – 13, 2018***

**Keith Adams – President, St. Rose Community One Voice**

Keith Adams is a longtime resident of the St. Rose Community. He is president of the Civic Association and the environmental citizens group, St. Rose Community One Voice. Adams is retired from St. Charles Parish, where he worked for the Department of Public Works and Wastewater. He holds a Class I, Class II, Class III, and Class IV license in wastewater and an electrical contractor's license. He is also a member of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers.

Mr. Adams also volunteers in his community and goes above and beyond his civic duties through his involvement as a member of the Citizens Accountability Panel for IMTT and St Charles Parish. He advocates for use of clean energy options and shares inventive ideas on reducing air emissions in the area of wastewater treatment.

**Kathryn S. Becker – Assistant General Counsel and Tribal Liaison, New Mexico Environment Department**

Ms. Becker has practiced law for the New Mexico Environment Department since 2005. Her clients run the gamut of environmental media and OHSA. Her practice generally comprises one of three aspects of administrative law: permitting, enforcement or rulemaking. As Tribal Liaison, Ms. Becker aids the Secretary of the Department in government-to-government communications and consultations. In addition, she assists the Secretary with EPA's Border 2020 and EJ 2020 programs.

Prior to joining the Department, Ms. Becker worked as legal counsel to the State Parks Division of the NM Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department. Ms. Becker previously worked as a lawyer for the Navajo Nation Department of Justice in Tuba City, Arizona.

Ms. Becker is a member of the New Mexico State Bar and Navajo Nation Bar Association. She is admitted to practice in the State of New Mexico, the United States District Court for the District of New Mexico and the Navajo Nation. She received her Juris Doctorate in 2000 from the University of North Dakota School of Law.

**Denise Bennett – Deputy Secretary, Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ)**

Denise Bennett previously worked at LDEQ as an air permit writer from 2003 - 2006. She returned to the agency after 10 years as an industry employee and consultant working with agricultural and petrochemical companies. Her duties include legislative liaison, community outreach and engagement, industry and government relations, and special projects.

Denise has extensive experience in plant operations, environmental regulatory affairs, compliance and permitting. She holds a bachelor's degree in chemical engineering from Howard University in Washington, and an MBA from LSU.

**Arturo Blanco – Director, Environmental Justice, Tribal and International Affairs**

Arturo Blanco is the Director of EPA Region 6's Office of Environmental Justice, Tribal, and International Affairs (OEJTIA) overseeing: all Environmental Justice efforts in the Region; the El Paso Border Office in support of the U.S./Mexico Environmental Border 2020 program along Texas and New Mexico; and directing the Environmental Justice and Tribal General Assistance Program.

Before joining EPA, Arturo successfully served in the Houston Department of Health and Human Services, where he was Chief of the Bureau of Pollution Control and Prevention. He also served successfully in the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission (now known as Texas Commission on Environmental Quality) as program manager of air and waste programs, and as an environmental investigator.

Arturo is an honorably discharged and retired veteran of the U.S. Air Force; was conferred the degrees of Master of Public Administration by Troy State University, Alabama and Bachelor of Science in Professional Aeronautics by Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, Florida. He was also presented with the Certificate of Completion with distinction of the America's Leaders of Change Program by Kansas University, Public Management Center, and by the National Urban Fellows.

Arturo has over 35 years of consecutive public service experience.

**Bobbie Boyer – current member of the Lower Rio Grande Public Water Works Authority**

Bobbie and her late husband, Roosy, are from Vado, NM. They moved back to Vado in 1984 and became part of the Vado Water Association in the late 80's. Roosy Boyer was one of the main advocates of the formation of the Lower Rio Grande Public Water Works Authority and sadly he died before the Authority was created. Bobbie Boyer was a Board Member Secretary Treasurer and a volunteer employee of the Vado Water Mutual Domestic Association, from 1995 until 2009 when the Lower Rio Grande Public Water Works Authority was formed. She continues to be a resident of Vado and receive services from the Authority.

**Kelly W. Cook – Director, Critical Infrastructure Division, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality**

Kelly Cook has worked for the State of Texas for 30 years. For the last 26 years, he has worked at the TCEQ and its predecessor agencies. Kelly is currently the director of the Critical Infrastructure Division in the Office of Compliance and Enforcement (OCE). Kelly started with TCEQ as a project manager in the Remediation Division, where he worked for 14 years. He then moved over to OCE where he has worked for the past 12 years.

Kelly's first 4 years with the State of Texas were with Texas A&M University, where he worked as the head lifeguard at the campus pool. Being the head lifeguard only meant he didn't have to clean the toilets as often as the other guards (so not as glamorous as head lifeguard may sound).

Kelly is a native Texan and a graduate of Texas A&M University. His wife and two sons are also Aggies, with his youngest son expecting (praying) to graduate from A&M next December.

**Ronnie Crossland – Chief, EPA Region 6 Emergency Management Branch**

Ronnie Crossland is currently the Chief of the Emergency Management Branch for the Region 6 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Ronnie Crossland holds a Bachelors of Science in Petroleum Engineering from the University of Texas at Austin and a Masters of Business Administration from the University of Texas at Dallas. Ronnie has over 31 years of experience working with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in a variety of programs including: Underground Injection Control, Hazardous Waste Enforcement, and Emergency Response. In the area of large disaster responses, Ronnie closely coordinates with states and other federal partners and has served in vital roles in some of the Region's largest disaster responses.

Mr. Crossland served as one of EPA's Incident Commanders responsible for over 1200 field personnel while responding to Hurricane's Katrina and Rita. He was the Regional Incident Commander for Hurricanes Gustav and

Ike and worked with Agency leadership to resolve and implement various policy related issues ranging from environmental sampling, waste management, and dispersant use for Deep Water Horizon. During Hurricane Harvey, Ronnie served as a senior liaison between EPA and the State of Texas to help ensure unity in response objectives and a common operating picture between the agencies.

**Steven Deal – Project Engineer/Manager, Construction Programs Bureau, New Mexico Environment Department**

Mr. Deal has been a licensed, professional engineer in the State of New Mexico since February 2009 and has worked for the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) Construction Programs Bureau (CPB) since November 2009. Steve oversees water, wastewater, and solid waste projects funded by both State and Federal funding sources. Projects are monitored from planning through construction. The oversight of the projects includes reviewing technical documents, contracts, and loan and grant funding requirements to ensure compliance with the State and Federal regulations. The funding programs Steve works with include the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF), the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF), the Rural Infrastructure Loan Program (RIP), Legislative Earmarks called Special Appropriations Projects (SAP), the Colonias Infrastructure Fund (CIF), the Water Project Fund (WTB), the Local Government Planning Fund, and State and Tribal Assistance Grants (STAG). Steve also provides technical review and assistance for Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) and the New Mexico Office of the Natural Resources Trustee.

In addition, Steve serves as the Department designee on the Colonias Infrastructure Board, delegated by the Department Secretary. Along with sitting on the Board, Steve provides technical review for the application and project implementation process for the program.

**Ramiro Garcia, Jr. – Deputy Director, Office of Compliance and Enforcement, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality**

Ramiro earned his Bachelor of Science in Biology from St. Edward's University, Austin, Texas in May 1994. Ramiro joined the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission (TNRCC) in October 1994 in the Petroleum Storage Tank (PST) Division where Ramiro had previously worked as a Mickey Leland environmental intern during the summer of 1993. Ramiro became a Team Leader in the PST Division in 1996.

In 2000, Ramiro transferred to the TNRCC Houston Region Office PST/Stage II Programs where he was an investigator and subsequently a Team Leader until 2005. In 2005, Ramiro transferred back to the TCEQ Central Office and worked in the Field Operations Support Division, Air Section where he focused on Air Emissions Events. In 2007, Ramiro became the Section Manager of the Field Operations Air Support Section. In 2008, Ramiro became the Area Director for the TCEQ Border/South Central Area comprised of the following Region Offices: Austin, San Antonio, El Paso, Laredo and Harlingen. In 2012, Ramiro became the Deputy Director of the Office of Compliance and Enforcement. Ramiro is a 2008 graduate of the Governor's Center, Senior Management Development Program and a 2014 graduate of the Governor's Center, Transformative Leadership Program. Ramiro and his wife, Melissa, have a seven year old son. Ramiro enjoys playing golf, fishing, hunting and staying active to try and keep up with his son.

**Trevor Hammons – Environmental Attorney Supervisor - Environmental Complaints and Local Services Division, Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality (ODEQ)**

J. Trevor Hammons is a supervising attorney for the Environmental Complaints and Local Services Division of the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality. He previously served as an Assistant Attorney General for the State of Oklahoma in the Environmental Protection Unit for five years, and is an Air Force veteran. Trevor is a native of Ottawa County and his grandmother taught elementary school in Quapaw, Oklahoma for 30 years. Trevor has worked in some capacity for the Tar Creek Superfund site since becoming a lawyer in 2004.

**Kelly Haragan – Clinical Professor and Director of the Environmental Clinic, The University of Texas at Austin, School of Law**

Kelly Haragan is a Clinical Professor and Director of the Environmental Clinic at the University of Texas School of Law. Her work focusing on working with communities to use environmental and civil rights laws, permitting processes, enforcement actions, and community education and organizing to improve health and safety and address historic environmental injustice. Prior to joining the Clinic, Kelly worked on environmental issues as counsel for nonprofits in Texas and Washington DC and for an environmental law firm in Austin. Kelly has been awarded the State Bar of Texas Poverty Law Section's Impact Award and the Texas Low Income Housing Information Service's Houser Award.

**Anne Idsal – Regional Administrator, EPA Region 6**

Anne L. Idsal serves as the Regional Administrator for EPA Region 6. Her responsibilities include overseeing the states of Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, New Mexico, and Texas, and 66 Tribal Nations. Ms. Idsal joined the Agency having spent her career working for the Texas state government in helping shape environmental and land policy for the state.

Anne Idsal served as the first female Chief Clerk of the Texas General Land Office where she oversaw all budget and expenditure matters, and initiated the Office's reorganization efforts to optimize business functions and provide cost-savings for taxpayers. She previously served as the general counsel to Texas General Land Office where she provided substantive and procedural legal counsel to the Commissioner and led an office of attorneys on issues relating to oil and gas, coastal lands, public lands, financial transactions, and general law.

An experienced Texas lawyer with extensive government experience, Ms. Idsal served as General Counsel to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, where she provided legal counsel to the Commissioners and oversaw the offices of the Chief Clerk, Public Interest Counsel, and Chief Auditor. She also served as a Special Counsel to the Chairman, providing counsel on policy development and implementation.

Ms. Idsal holds a Bachelor of Arts in Politics from Washington and Lee University, and a law degree from Baylor University.

**Rebecca Jim – Executive Director, Local Environmental Action Demanded (L.E.A.D.) Agency**

Rebecca Jim is the Executive Director for Local Environmental Action Demanded (L.E.A.D.) Agency, a non-profit corporation organized in 1997 to educate the community on environmental concerns and to take action to counter environmental hazards in Northeast Oklahoma. Rebecca is a member of the Cherokee Nation and a Tar Creek River Keeper. She is affiliated with the Water Keeper Alliance. Rebecca served as an Indian Counselor in

the Oklahoma School District for nearly 30 years and was a member of Teacher Corp where she served 2 years on the Southern Ute Reservation.

Rebecca has a B.S. in Behavioral Science from South Colorado State University and M.S. in Education from North Eastern State University in Oklahoma.

### **Hilton Kelley – Director, Community In Power and Development Association**

Hilton Kelley is currently one of the top Environmental Justice activists in North America. Prior to starting his environmental justice journey, Hilton Kelley was in the United States Navy where he served his country with great honor and pride for 6 years. Honorably discharged in 1986, he was awarded the sailor of the month award in 1983 aboard the USS Roanoke because of his outstanding workmanship and attention to detail.

After his honorable release from the military, Mr. Kelley pursued his life's passion of working in the film and television industry. He was inducted into the Screen Actors Guild (SAG-AFTRA) in 1991. During his acting career Hilton worked on movies including Dr. Doolittle with Eddie Murphy, Bicentennial Man with Robin Williams, and TV Shows such as Midnight Caller and Nash Bridges.

After more than a decade in the acting business, Mr. Kelley took a trip back home to Port Arthur, Texas. The disheartening conditions he found there inspired him to take action to rebuild and revitalize his home town community. In 2000 Hilton Founded the Community In-Power and Development Association Incorporated (CIDA Inc.). With this organization Hilton has been able to amass a long and impressive list of accomplishments benefitting the environment and the Port Arthur Community.

Hilton began to challenge the environmental violations of the plants that loom over the community he calls home. CIDA Inc. collects scientific data from the emission sources and educates residents of Port Arthur about the toxic burden they shoulder. In 2011 Hilton made history by winning the “Green Nobel Prize”: the Goldman Environmental Prize. Hilton was the first African American man to be the recipient of this prestigious award.

In the course of his work, Hilton has developed an unsurpassed track record of organizing communities, lecturing for educational institutions, such as Harvard and Rice, public and motivational speaking, and protest rally leadership.

### **Tim Kent – Environmental Director, Quapaw Tribe**

Tim has been the Environmental Director for the Quapaw Tribe for over 15 years. He graduated from Texas Tech with a degree in geophysics and attended graduate school at University of Texas studying Environmental Engineering. Tim has been a professional geoscientist since 1982 working for various corporations and Engineering consulting firms before joining the Quapaw Tribe in 2002.

### **Demetria Kimbrough – Enforcement/Asbestos Branch Manager, Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ)**

Demetria Kimbrough is a Branch Manager over the Asbestos and Enforcement programs in the Office of Air Quality at the Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ). She coordinates with local officials and the regulated community to educate and inform the public about asbestos regulations as well as provide compliance assistance to ensure minimal impact on the environment and public health. In addition, she works to ensure that the Asbestos and Enforcement program activities are conducted in accordance with state and

federal guidelines, rules, and regulations. She has a Bachelor of Science degree in Chemistry and Mathematics and a Master of Public Health degree with an emphasis on Environmental and Occupational Health. Ms. Kimbrough has served in various capacities at ADEQ, including Inspector, Inspector Supervisor, Enforcement Coordinator, and Asbestos and Enforcement Supervisor, where she has worked diligently to advance ADEQ's mission of protecting, enhancing, and restoring the natural environment for the well-being of all Arkansans.

**Greg Langley – Press Secretary, Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ)**

Greg Langley has been LDEQ's press secretary since 2013. Prior to that, he was a working journalist for 30 years, including a 23-year stint at The Baton Rouge Advocate. He has been a reporter, editor, copy editor, page designer, feature writer, books editor and managing editor.

Greg grew up on a farm in Tennessee's Cumberland Mountains. He is a graduate of the University of Tennessee with a degree in communications and a Navy veteran who served aboard an aircraft carrier in the 1970s.

Greg and his wife, Lori Huff Langley, are the parents of three sons

**Vernice Miller-Travis – Senior Advisor, Environmental Justice and Equitable Development, Skeo**

Ms. Miller-Travis is the Senior Advisor for Environmental Justice and Equitable Development at Skeo and is part of Skeo's Community Planning and Revitalization team. For 30 years, Ms. Miller-Travis has been a leading proponent of environmental justice and equitable and sustainable development, at the nexus between civil rights and environmental enforcement. She is a recognized leader in this multi-disciplinary field at the local, national and international levels. She is an urban planner who is sought after for her environmental conflict resolution expertise and facilitation and mediation skills. Her work has focused on restoring blighted, contaminated and environmentally distressed communities as safe, healthy and vibrant places to live, work, go to school, worship and recreate. Her work supports federal, state, local and neighborhood efforts to advance community revitalization via brownfields and Superfund site remediation and redevelopment, urban waters restoration and area-wide planning through collaborative problem solving, building cultural competence, and cross-cultural conflict mediation.

**Karen Nichols – Project Manager, Lower Rio Grande Public Water Works Authority**

Karen Nichols has held the title of Projects Manager of the Lower Rio Grande Public Water Works Authority since it began operations in 2010. The Authority was formed by the merger of five mutual domestic water associations in southern Dona Ana County under House Bill 185 sponsored by Representative Cervantes and passed by the New Mexico Legislature in 2009. Ms. Nichols served as Secretary/Treasurer and Business Manager for the Desert Sands Mutual Domestic Water Consumers Association from 1978 until 2010. Her experience with water system improvements projects began with the initial construction of the Desert Sands system and included planning, funding and execution of a number of projects for pipeline replacement and upgrade and the additional of new wells, tanks, booster pumps, office building and treatment plants. With the Authority, her job focus has shifted entirely to projects, and the number and scope of projects have greatly expanded. The Authority is now comprised of 11 water systems in four separate service areas and 2 wastewater systems.

### **James Sanders – Mayor, City of Blytheville**

Mayor James W. Sanders has lived a life of public service. He began his career at the age of 18 when he joined the Blytheville Police Department in 1977 where he worked as a Cadet. He rose through the ranks from a Cadet in 1977 to 1980 when he achieved the rank of Patrol Officer. From 1980 until 1998 he rose from the rank of Patrol Officer to the rank of Captain. As Captain, he received his Criminal Justice Degree and went on to graduate the FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation) National Academy in Quantico, Virginia. As Captain, he commanded the Criminal Investigation Division until his retirement from the Blytheville Police department in the year 2000. But, he continued his work in Law Enforcement after his retirement when he went to work for the Arkansas State Police - Special Operations Division.

While working for the State Police, James ran for, and was elected to the Blytheville City Council where he served one and a half terms. In 2009, Mississippi County's Sheriff, Leroy Meadows, succumb to a long illness. Sheriff Meadows hand-picked Sanders to be his successor as the Sheriff of Mississippi County, Arkansas for the remainder of his term. After careful thoughts and prayers, James and his wife, Joyce, decided he had a need to better serve his community by running for Mayor of Blytheville, Arkansas. James won the election in November 2010 and began serving as Mayor on January 1, 2011. James believes it's a Mayor's responsibility to keep City's government running properly. This includes enforcing city ordinances and making sure that the residents receive maximum benefits and services for the taxes they pay.

His first four year term was successful and he is currently serving his second four year term. Some of his many accomplishments over the past eight years are:

Arkansas Municipal League: Advisory Council 2012 – 2014; State Certified Public Official 2012 – Current; Executive Committee 2014 – Current; (Past) Vice President District 1 Arkansas Municipal League 2014 – 2015; President Arkansas Black Mayor's Association 2017; (Past) Chairman East Arkansas Planning and Development 2017

Marriage to his wife: Joyce Sanders of 34 years and three sons

### **Wilma Subra – Technical Advisor, Louisiana Environmental Action Network (LEAN)**

Wilma Subra provides technical assistance to citizens, across the United States and some foreign countries, concerned with their environment by combining technical research and evaluations. This information is then presented to community members so that strategies may be developed to address their local struggles.

She has completed a seven year term as Vice-Chair of the Environmental Protection Agency National Advisory Council for Environmental Policy and Technology (NACEPT), a five year term on the National Advisory Committee of the U. S. Representative to the Commission for Environmental Cooperation and a six year term on the EPA National Environmental Justice Advisory Council (NEJAC) where she served as a member of the Cumulative Risk and Impacts Working Group of the NEJAC Council, and chaired the NEJAC Gulf Coast Hurricanes Work Group.

Mrs. Subra holds degrees in Microbiology/Chemistry from the University of Southwestern Louisiana. She received the MacArthur Fellowship "Genius" Award from the MacArthur Foundation in 1999 for helping ordinary citizens understand, cope with and combat environmental issues in their communities. She also received the 2011 Domestic Human Rights Award from the Global Exchange for her dedication to human rights issues.

**Gloria Vaughn – Associate Director for Environmental Justice, Office of Environmental Justice, Tribal and International Affairs, EPA Region 6**

Ms. Gloria Vaughn works in the Environmental Protection Agency's Region 6 Office of Environmental Justice Tribal and International Affairs where she is the Associate Director for Environmental Justice. As Associate Director, Gloria works to ensure that all persons, regardless of race, ethnicity, culture or income, are protected from unacceptable levels of environmental pollution and hazards and are given the opportunity to meaningfully participate in environmental decisions and processes that may affect their health and or community.

Gloria began her career with EPA in its Region 2 office in New York City before moving to Dallas and has also worked at EPA Headquarters' Offices in Washington, D.C. She has an extensive environmental background having worked in EPA's Air, Water, and Solid Waste programs. Prior to joining EPA, Gloria worked as a Research Scientist with the Lederle Division of the American Cyanamid Corporation.

Ms. Vaughn is a Mississippi native and has a B.S. in Biology from Mississippi Valley State University and a Master's in Environmental Science from Jackson State University.

**Stacy Walters – Regulatory Environmental Administrator, City of Fort Worth - Water Department**

After high school, I enrolled at Delta State University (Cleveland, Mississippi) in 1982 and received a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology with a minor in Chemistry. During my time in college, I spent all four years in the marching and concert ensembles. It is this experience that taught me discipline and it was a great balance to my studies.

After college, in 1986 I began my career in Memphis, Tennessee as a product and formulation chemist working for a production company that manufactured pesticides. In 1989, Ms. Walters married and moved to Texas and worked for a leading environmental testing laboratory in Carrollton, TX for seven years.

Currently, Ms. Walters is the Regulatory Environmental Administrator for the City of Fort Worth Water Department. She joined the city as a Chemist in 1996. Her 30 plus years of experience in environmental science was instrumental in the City of Fort Worth's laboratory becoming the first municipal laboratory in Texas to become nationally accredited through National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (NELAP). Although the future is sometimes unknown, one thing is for sure: no matter what her priorities are in life, the environment will always be important.