

# **Pasadena Citizens' Advisory Council**

www.pasadenacac.org

## **Summary of Tuesday, April 26, 2016 Meeting**

### **PCAC Visits City of Pasadena Emergency Operations Center And Learns What Happens There When a Plant Has a Significant Industrial Event**

Walter Gant, City of Pasadena Emergency Management Coordinator (EMC) and Deputy Senior EMC Frank Bengochea welcomed PCAC members and guests to the City of Pasadena Office of Emergency Management and its Emergency Operations Center (EOC). The Pasadena Citizens' Advisory Council (PCAC) meeting was the second in a two-part series on what happens in significant plant events. In March, PCAC visited the OxyVinyls EOC to learn what happens in a plant and how they communicate with responsible agencies in affected cities and the county. The April meeting explained what happens after the city receives such a notification. The slides include photos of the EOC, describe the risk and hazards for which it may be activated, and show the 23 positions that could be filled by 1-2 people each if the highest level of emergency occurs. A new 4-person EOC was recently built, with grant funding, for smaller events. The city also has a ham radio operation. Speakers described the equipment the city can deploy when needed, which includes a mobile radio tower for use if a hurricane takes out other broadcast capability.

The EOC has 4 levels of activation; Level 1 the highest. In a one month period, there were no Level 1 activations, 7 Level 2s, 10 Level 3s, and no Level 4s. Slides list the events that caused the activation. Bengochea said the City of Houston called for a Level 1 EOC activation during the April 25, 2016 floods on the northwest/north side of town.

Bengochea explained that the city uses the same Community Emergency Communications protocols described by OxyVinyls. The protocols were jointly adopted by East Harris County Manufacturers Association and the responsible agencies in east Harris County cities and the county that would communicate with the public in a significant event.

If a stricken facility recommends a shelter in place, the city may activate its community warning systems from the e-Notify/e-Merge system. The city may choose to shelter part of the city in place even if the plant does not recommend it. In such a case, they may send someone to the plant to determine the need. A call to shelter in place is made by a city or county, not a plant. In Pasadena, the police department, fire department, and office of emergency management (OEM) may initiate a shelter in place. The National Weather Service plume models provide information on plume movement to help the city determine which part of the city to shelter.

CEC protocols were adopted by the Southeast Regional Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) for use in member plants and the cities in its territory. In a period of more than 15 months, SERLEPC recorded 6 Level 3 (Warning) events and 6 Level 2 (Watch) events.

The e-Notify/e-Merge system allows the City of Pasadena fire department dispatch staff to initiate Community Warning Systems easily. The slides list the variety of tools the city has to warn the community if, for example, there were a need to shelter in place for a chemical release or evaluate for a hurricane.