

Pasadena Citizens' Advisory Council

An Interim Report on Lessons PCAC Plants Have Learned to Date about COVID-19

May 26, 2020

The COVID-19 pandemic has not ended, but several months have passed, and Pasadena Citizens' Advisory Council (PCAC) community members asked member plants several questions about their responses to COVID-19 and lessons learned to date.

When stay-at-home orders were issued in March, Pasadena's chemical plants, refineries, and related businesses continued to operate because the chemical business is deemed a Critical Infrastructure Sector by the US Department of Homeland Security. Asking PCAC plants what they make or do that makes them essential, community members heard the following during their late May Zoom video meeting. Essential products and services fell into the following categories:

- Fuel: Additives for gasoline, refining crude oil to make gasoline and other fuels, storage terminals
- Industrial gases that are necessary for food and medical purposes
- Plastics: catalysts for making plastics; terminals for plastic feedstocks; products that are used to make IV tubing, etc.
- Specialty chemicals used for agricultural, automotive, and construction purposes, as well as pharmaceutical uses and toilet paper manufacturing.
- Treatment of wastewater

Several plants are producing things in high demand due to COVID-19. Examples include plastic-related components used for IV tubing, blood bags, face shields, and bottles for hand sanitizers. One plant makes a water-soluble film used for laundry bags. The bag dissolves in hot water, allowing the user to avoid removing contaminated items from the bag prior to washing.

Asked how plants or corporations have helped communities here and elsewhere, several commented.

- Donated money to food banks, United Way, and educational programs.
- Purchased food for those being served by The Bridge over Troubled Water
- Donated hand sanitizers and necessary PPE (masks, safety glasses, safety goggles, face shields, etc.) to first responders and nursing homes. Some plants had extra N95 masks to donate.
- Donated gasoline gift cards to city front line workers.

- T-shirts from the cancelled Trash Bash have been donated to homeless shelters and organizations such as The Shriners.

After stay-at-home orders were issued, most plants moved personnel home whose jobs could be performed there. Now that those orders have been lifted, a few plants have brought telecommuters back to the workplace. Others are phasing in their return in the coming weeks and months, and others will continue to have some telecommute. In all plants, efforts made at the start of COVID-19 to keep workers healthy will remain in place. These include medical screenings (temperature monitoring), enhanced sanitation protocols, social distancing (or use of masks) and limiting in-person meetings.