

Pasadena Citizens' Advisory Council

Innovations in Truck Transportation Safety

September 22, 2020

With a longstanding interest in hazardous material transportation, Pasadena Citizens' Advisory Council (PCAC) opened a series of meetings on innovations in the safety of transporting chemicals with an initial focus on trucking. Frank Scheaffer of Heniff Transportation Systems described components of the chemical transporter's safety program, including technological advances.

Scheaffer listed four ways Heniff maintains top tier safety performance as ranked by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, an arm of the U. S. Department of Transportation. The four include recruiting and retaining safe drivers, ongoing training, compensation to reward safe behaviors and "safety first" management. Computer databases track items such as speeding and hard stops driver by driver on a score card that is used to reward safe driving.

Among the company's innovative technologies are electronic dispatch, onboard computers and logs, onboard navigation and route management, and an app for matching tractors and trailers. Integrating its technology with that of customers allows the company to map the status of shipments in nearly real time.

Additional technology aims to improve safety over the road. To reduce distractions, the company uses an onboard computer to communicate with drivers that than phoning them. Trucks hear audio alerts of lane departures. While disc brakes have been used on tractors, they are now used on trailers also. A journey management program provides drivers with info to plan their trips, which also reduces distractions while driving.

Asked about driverless trucks, Scheaffer expressed doubt they would be used to transport chemicals. Both community and plant members of PCAC found the presentation informative. The series will continue with periodic future meetings on rail, pipeline, and marine shipping of chemicals.