

Pasadena Citizens' Advisory Council

PCAC Updated on Odor Event, Hears Presentation on Channel Industries Mutual Aid

Pasadena Citizens' Advisory Council planned to talk about Channel Industries Mutual Aid (CIMA) but changed its late August agenda to add reports on an August 15 event at the Lubrizol Deer Park plant that released a pungent odor that slowly traveled through multiple communities and was a nuisance to some and an irritant to others. Though investigations are still underway, the community-industry forum heard Deer Park Lubrizol General Manager Sam Striegel describe the event itself, the plant's notifications of responsible agencies and its communications with and for the community. Azell Carter, Emergency Management Coordinator for the City of Pasadena, explained the city's experience with the event, its decision not to call for a shelter in place, and how the city communicated with residents. Craig Hill and Dimetra Hamilton of Harris County Pollution Control Services talked about their air sampling efforts and where the public can track the results. PCAC facilitator Diane Sheridan summarized input from Pasadena and other communities that expressed frustrations learning what the odor was, its hazards, and steps to protect yourself and your family. In an effort to learn from this experience, community input will be shared with industry and government entities responsible for communicating with the public in an emergency. Striegel said, "Lubrizol will partner with EHCMA (East Harris County Manufacturers Association) to work with the local agencies to better understand how all parties can improve the flow of information during events to ensure that all know how to respond." Carter agreed such an effort is needed.

PCAC also heard from its scheduled speaker, Tod Jenkins, Chair of Channel Industries Mutual Aid (CIMA). With more than 100 industrial facilities and local government members, CIMA is the world's largest emergency mutual aid organization. Serving the Houston Ship Channel area, CIMA includes emergency response crews, specialists, and equipment that can be sent to each other's aid if needed. CIMA owns some emergency response vehicles and equipment, but most emergency vehicles belong to plants and cities and Harris County. CIMA responders do not take over the command of an event but rather serve as a resource when outside help is needed for events such as major plant fires and mass casualties.

Readers are welcome to attend PCAC meetings and email suggestions for the community-industry forum. Contact info@pasadenacac.org for details.