



Deer Park Community Advisory Council

Summary of August 22, 2011 Meeting

Deer Park CAC Hears That Truck Safety Programs Are Working

Speakers from the Pasadena and La Porte Police Departments recently reported to the Deer Park Community Advisory Council (DPCAC) that their commercial vehicle enforcement units are improving truck safety along major thoroughfares in the two cities. City manager Jay Stokes said the City of Deer Park is in the lengthy process of reactivating the Deer Park unit that will inspect trucks for compliance with federal truck safety regulations. Speakers' slides are available at www.deerparkcac.org.

Officer Robert Guerra of the Pasadena Police Department said Pasadena's unit operates on Hwy. 225, the Beltway 8 corridor, Red Bluff Road from Spencer Highway to Hwy. 146, and Bay Area Boulevard in Bayport. The 7-member team is certified to inspect cargo tanks and hazardous materials. The unit also responds to collisions and service calls involving commercial motor vehicles. A Pasadena survey showed that 60 trucks per minute travel Hwy. 225 during peak hours of 8-11 a.m. and 1-3 p.m. Data from 2009 show 2856 vehicles were inspected, and 9420 violations found.

Guerra said, "The goal of the Pasadena program is to reduce the number of commercial vehicle crashes resulting in bodily injury and fatalities through enforcement efforts and fleet education and training." The number of weight violations is growing with the increased truck traffic, including that from the Port of Houston Bayport Container Port. Of the 71 commercial vehicle accidents year to date, 93-95% occur on weekdays.

Officer Dan Hoffman, with a comparable unit in the La Porte Police Department, said the out-of-service rate was 98% when the program began in 1996. Year to date, the rate is 29%, indicating that the commercial enforcement vehicle program is working. La Porte enforces truck regulations on Hwy. 146, Hwy. 225, and Port Road. About 35,000-42,000 trucks per day travel those La Porte roads.

Members quizzed the police officers about how they spot an overweight truck—flattened tires—and whether they force a truck unload onto another vehicle. They can, or they can

12/13/2011

escort the driver to his or her destination if the load cannot be lightened. Asked about tankers carrying chemicals, both officers said chemical haulers take safety seriously.

DPCAC meets again on Monday, September 26 for the annual reports on air emissions and air quality trends. For details about the 6 p.m. meeting, contact Kel Boisvert at 281/817-3340.

###

EPA Schools Air Toxics Monitoring Results Reviewed by DPCAC

At its late August meeting, the Deer Park Community Advisory Council (DPCAC) reviewed results from the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) air toxics monitoring project at San Jacinto Elementary School and sampling conducted nearby by Houston Regional Monitoring (HRM). Details may be found at www.deerparkcac.org.

HRM has provided annual reports on air monitoring to DPCAC since 1992. Members have followed the EPA School Air Toxics Monitoring Project since 2009 because San Jacinto Elementary School and Deer Park Junior High School were among 65 schools in 22 states and 2 tribal areas where EPA conducted air monitoring to see if school children's health is being affected by toxic air pollutants in the outdoors air.

For about 90 days, EPA took samples for 24 hours at a time on an every 6th day schedule to obtain 10 quality samples of volatile organic compounds and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons. EPA issued a report in June 2011 recommending additional monitoring due to concerns about benzene and butadiene caused by one high concentration of butadiene. The agency has not yet announced when the additional monitoring will begin.

Because of its annual reports, DPCAC members know that thousands of samples of benzene and butadiene and other hazardous air pollutants have been taken since several DPCAC plants responded to members' requests for monitoring data in 1992. The original canister monitoring system was replaced in 1995 by what was then a state-of-the-art system called FTIR. In May 2010, that now outdated technology was replaced by an automated gas chromatograph. Members believed the EPA should have used this valuable actual monitoring data source as well as data from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) monitor on Durant Street to base its choice for the monitoring study. Instead, the EPA based its choice of schools on the reported estimate of annual emissions from a 2002 EPA study and modeling of that data.

Based on results from the sampling at San Jacinto Elementary, EPA notes that there is no level of concern for short-term exposures of either benzene or butadiene. However, because one sample value for butadiene was greater than the other results, EPA indicates a potential concern for long-term exposure to both benzene and butadiene. For that reason, EPA will conduct an additional round of monitoring at the school.

12/13/2011

Though benzene was not found at levels of concern in the 10 samples, EPA sees a potential for long-term exposure to both benzene and butadiene. For that reason plus the sample with a high level of butadiene, the agency will do additional monitoring.

The new equipment at HRM Site 16 takes hourly measurements of more than 50 volatile organic compounds, including benzene and butadiene. Since May 2010, it has recorded more than 8500 hourly samples, producing results that HRM was able to compare to the 10 samples EPA took over its 90 day study period. The 13 months of HRM data show the average hourly concentrations for both benzene and butadiene to be well below levels of concern for both short term and long term exposure.