



Deer Park Community Advisory Council

Summary of May 23, 2016 Meeting

DPCAC TOURS NEW US COAST GUARD STATION

Deer Park Community Advisory Council (DPCAC) members and guests met at the new US Coast Guard Station (USCG) in late May for a presentation about the Coast Guard's work and its interaction with industry as well as a tour of the new facility at Ellington Field.

Capt. Rob McLellan, Deputy Commander, USCG Sector Houston-Galveston, talked about the Coast Guard's missions and the programs in which they interact with industry. This Coast Guard sector includes not just Houston and Galveston but also extends east to Lake Charles and as far north as the Oklahoma-Texas border. The Coast Guard by law is charged to carry out 11 missions: ports, waterways, and coastal security; drug interdiction; aids to navigation; search and rescue; living marine resources; marine safety; defense readiness; migrant interdiction; marine environmental protection; law enforcement; and ice operations. In south central Texas, they carry out all but ice breaking. The agency is now part of the US Department of Homeland Security. The first priority is always saving lives.

Capt. McLellan and Commander Luis Sandoval, Chief of Logistics took DPCAC on a tour of the Command Center and Vessel Traffic Service. The Command Center includes not only Coast Guard operations but also seats for the Harris County Sheriff's Office and access to its cameras as well as desks for Customs and Border Protection. From this room, the Coast Guard monitors the ship channel with cameras that can zoom in on anything suspicious. Officers showed members footage of fires as they occurred this spring at two ship channel refineries. The Coast Guard conducts Search and Rescue missions from this Command Center, and they track helicopters and boats during a response.

Vessel Traffic Service (VTS) technology was impressive, especially to DPCAC members who first saw the operations 25 years ago, before it was computerized. Cameras, radar, and an automated identification system let the Coast Guard track ships and barges. At any time, they are tracking 600-700 vessels. They can click on a screen and see the vessel's name, cargo, where it came from and where it is going, size of ship, whether it is loaded or not, and more. The tracking begins when the vessel is overseas. All deep draft vessels are required to give a 96-hour notice of arrival.

Capt. McLellan said the Coast Guard and industry are well integrated in this district and must be because there is so much industry, and the Port of Houston is the largest industrial port in the world. For example, the Coast Guard inspects plants located on the water at least annually for safety and security. Plants on the water must get their security vulnerability assessments approved by the Coast Guard. Those plants are subject to the Marine Security (MARSEC) act and the Marine Transportation Safety Act (MTSA). MARSEC security threat levels are set by the Coast Guard and posted at facilities on the water. The Coast Guard and industry serve together on committees such as the Harbor Safety Committee, the Maritime Security Committee, and the East Harris County Manufacturers Association (EHCMA) Security Committee.

Visitors are welcome to attend the August 22 DPCAC meeting on *Industrial Hygiene: Protecting People from Workplace Hazards*. For details, contact facilitator Diane Sheridan at 281-326-5253. Visit www.deerparkcac.org to read recent meeting summaries, find links to useful resources on emergency communications and the environment, see lists of DPCAC community and plant members, read our mission and purpose statements, and offer input.