



Deer Park Community Advisory Council

Summary of June 1, 2015 Meeting

DPCAC Learns about Barge Traffic

Curious about barge versus ship traffic on the Houston Ship Channel, Deer Park Community Advisory Council (DPCAC) requested data from the Greater Houston Port Bureau and learned that, each year, there are approximately 200,000 vessel movements by barges and 20,000 by deep draft ships moving cargo on the Houston Ship Channel. Data also showed that, in 2013, the Houston-Galveston Customs District was:

- 2nd in exports, 1st in imports, and 1st in total trade in *volume* of cargo
- 1st in exports, 3rd in imports, and 2nd in total trade in the *value* of cargo

Mark Wright, Vice President Southern Region of American Waterways Operators (AWO), spoke to the community-industry forum about the barge industry. Wright said that AWO is a national trade association for the U.S. tugboat, towboat, and barge industry, representing about 80 percent of the 4000 tugboats and towboats and 27,000 barges in the U.S.

Barges operate on inland and coastal waterways, moving primarily agricultural products, coal, and petroleum throughout a nationwide water transportation network. The U.S. maritime industry is uniquely American as a result of the 1920 Jones Act. The Jones Act states that tugboats, towboats, and barges travelling between two domestic ports must be American-owned and operated by U.S. citizens.

DPCAC members said one of the most interesting things they learned is how barges compare to truck and train transport. Wright said one towboat with 15 barges carries as much cargo as a thousand 18-wheeler trucks or 215 rail cars.

Asked to comment on environmental protection, Wright said regulations developed as a result of the Exxon *Valdez*, have decreased spills 90 percent since 1998. Best management practices to reduce tank barge emissions proved effective in tests conducted several years ago in conjunction with when East Harris Manufacturers Association and the Environmental Defense Fund.

The next DPCAC meeting, on August 24 at 6:00 p.m., will feature an update on the Keystone XL Pipeline. For information about the meeting, contact Kevin Honohan at 281/930-2300 x 2439. Visit www.deerparkcac.org to read recent meeting topics, find links to useful resources on emergency

communications and the environment, see lists of DPCAC community and plant members, and read our mission and purpose statements.