PRESENTATION
ROHM AND HAAS KENTUCKY
LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

Jack W. Coe

What motivated industry interest in a Deer Park CAC?
What motivated community interest in a Deer Park CAC?

In late 1988, I was asked by our plant manager to visit several Rohm and Haas Company sites that had Community Advisory Councils (CACs). In these visits, we wanted to determine why they were formed; what were the CACs accomplishing in the industry/community relationship and what topics were covered and what responses were being experienced.

My report included a visit to the Louisville, Philadelphia and Bristol plant sites to discuss their Community Advisory Councils. The Rohm and Haas Company has been an acknowledged leader in forming CACs. This acknowledgement and request for developing further chemical industry assistance was from the Chemical Manufacturers Association (CMA) in Washington DC. The Louisville plant initiated a CAC in 1986, closely followed by Bristol and Philadelphia. All three plant sites expressed very positive experiences with their CAC relationships. This response did not mean that there were no disagreements on information provided or that community

DSW 137573

concerns were being fully addressed. It did mean that a dialogue between plant managers and citizen participants was established on community concerns and these concerns were being addressed through regular monthly meetings.

This valued community/industry experience quickly became a Rohm and Haas Company initiative which placed great significance on having each plant site in North America involved with a CAC.

After completing my report to the Rohm and Haas Texas plant manager, we agreed that I would conduct one-on-one focus meetings with a cross-section of citizens in the Houston Ship Channel area. Overall the response to a person was, "there's not enough interested citizens for each company to have their own CAC citizen membership, but I am very interested in the concept and hope that an answer can be worked out."

In early 1986, we, Rohm and Haas Texas, became very active in the East Harris County Manufacturers Association (EHCMA). Between 1986 and 1988, this association grew from a 16-member plant manager association to over 80 members due to a number of community outreach issues such as SARA Title III Toxic Release Emission Inventory Report and establishing Local Emergency Planning Committees.

DSW 137574

This report required a dissemination of information to the public. Seven community based areas were agreed upon to provide outreach on this issue. Those seven areas included Houston, Channelview, Baytown, La Porte, Bayport, Pasadena and Deer Park. Again, each outreach area included plant manager members of EHCMA. Each area, rather than the 80 members, had a better understanding of their publics. (This early industry make-up has now created seven CACS). The Deer Park outreach area included most of the Deer Park Community Advisory Council industrial members.

Deer Park was one of the first single community/multiple industry CACs in the nation as per CMA. Early on, there was some reluctance by the Deer Park plant manager group to pursue a joint industry CAC. The primary reason was that they participated in one of the best-in-the-state, if not the nation, Local Emergency Planning Committees (LEPC).

Why initiate something similar requiring plant managers and community citizen involvement? (1) Because the reason for the LEPC is to provide "local emergency planning" which involves local industry emergency planners working with the local community emergency directors and the CAC would be a forum for further dissemination; (2) Because the CAC focuses on "community based concerns" about industry impact on community environment, it was felt there was a basis for developing a Deer

DSW 137575

Park CAC. The intent would be to establish a dialogue with the citizen membership/plant manager attendees which would enhance and foster improved communications, that is, relationship and understanding. In late 1989, four plant managers, representing Shell, Lubrizol, Occidental and Rohm and Haas Texas, met on several occasions to discuss the possibility of forming a single community-multiple industry community advisory council. Each had some reluctance to the idea of forming a Deer Park CAC. Some of this reluctance centered on whether there would be enough community leader interest and time for this level of commitment. Once time and commitment had been agreed to in early 1990, it was then determined to ask six citizens from Deer Park to meet with them and discuss the possibility of a Deer Park CAC. These six citizens were participants in the original one-on-one CAC focus groups. They included a businesswoman (Theresa Hartley), a retired/small business owner (Buddy Bishop), community newspaper publisher (Larry Power), school superintendent and mayor.

Theresa will now address how the Deer Park CAC was formed and our basic ground rules.

DSW 137576