

Goodrich opponent requests support from Kemah

By MARK TOOHEY
Staff Writer

Promising a fight "until the very end", a Seabrook resident has asked Kemah City Council to support area environmentalists in their quest to halt construction of a B.F. Goodrich chemical plant east of Highway 146 in Bayport.

Bob Johnson, a member of the Galveston Bay Conservation and Preservation Association (GBCPA), one of several parties opposed to construction of the \$100 million chlorine plant, asked council Thursday to support his group's efforts.

The Texas Air Control Board (TACB) ruled May 19 that construction permits be issued to Goodrich for its proposed facility.



ENVIRONMENTALIST BOB JOHNSON

Board members voted seven to two that construction permits be granted, but stipulated Goodrich should monitor ethylene dichloride and chlorine emissions in the area surrounding the proposed plant site.

Several area groups and cities, including the GBCPA, Seabrook and El Lago, opposed to construction of the plant, were parties to a five week public hearing, which concluded March 7 in Seabrook.

Johnson told council members Thursday the proposed Bayport facility will be Goodrich's largest in the United States.

"They will manufacture chlorine and caustic soda. 800 tons of chlorine will be manufactured there per day. Some people at NASA have done a study and have determined that within eight minutes of a

chlorine escape if winds are out of the north lethal amounts of the toxic gas would be emitted into the air. Your second breath could be your last," he said.

Although Johnson conceded Goodrich will use the best available control technology, he told council members the best may not be good enough.

Johnson said GBCPA has appealed the TACB ruling to a district court in Austin.

"If our appeal is denied then we've exhausted our administrative remedies. Then we'll be using legal remedies," he added.

According to Johnson, the GBCPA has a better than 50 percent chance of halting construction of the proposed facility.

He added the GBCPA already has

exhausted \$30,000 in legal fees and urged council members to solicit support from the residents of Kemah.

"We'd like for you to urge people to send in donations. We also solicit memberships to our organization. We'd like for people to be able to tell our story," Johnson said.

Councilwoman Sylvia Jackson said she'd support the efforts of GBCPA and also urged other council members to do so.

"There placing it right in our laps and it's too dangerous," she said.

"I think we should consider publicly endorsing their (GBCPA) efforts," Jackson added.

Mayor Ben Blackledge said he too would support the group's actions.

See SUPPORT, page 3

21941001

Support

Continued from page 1

"You have a good story to tell when you tell people they might die tomorrow," he said.

Kemah resident Paul Vavra also questioned the TACB's ruling and said it neglected to consider land use.

"I was there in Austin at the meeting and I'm convinced the air board is more opposed to what people want. It's difficult to get their cooperation on land use," he said.

"If there is a vacant spot in River Oaks, I guess they (the air board) would say it's alright to build a chemical plant there," Vavra added.

Council agree two weeks go to endorse a resolution opposing construction of the Goodrich facility.

Council meets again at 7:30 p.m. June 8 at City Hall, 6th at Bradford.

21941002