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Community Relations Plan

for

Hu-Mar Chemicals

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September 2000

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COMMUNITY RELATIONS PLAN
for
Hu-Mar Chemical Proposed State Superfund Site

Palacios, Matagorda County, Texas

January 2000

Overview of Community Relations Plan

This community relations plan (CRP) identifies issues of community concern regarding the Hu-Mar Chemical Proposed State Superfund Site (Hu-Mar) located in the city of Palacios in Matagorda County, Texas. This CRP also outlines the anticipated community relations activities to be conducted during each phase of the cleanup at the Hu-Mar site.

The Hu-Mar community relations plan has been prepared to aid the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission (TNRCC) in developing a community relations program tailored to the needs of the community affected by the Hu-Mar site. The TNRCC will conduct community relations activities to ensure that the local public has input to decisions and access to information about Superfund activities at the Hu-Mar site.

The TNRCC has the responsibility for managing the cleanup of this site, and the TNRCC Remediation Division will oversee all community relations activities at the site.

Site Profile

Site Location and Description:

28E 43' 45" North Latitude, 96E 13' 15" West Longitude

The Hu-Mar Chemical Corporation site is located north of Palacios, Matagorda County, Texas on McGlothlin Road between 4th and 12th Streets.

The 20-acre plant site consists of a large storage barn, three acres of surface impoundments, that are capped and vegetated, on the northwest corner, and a brick structure which is an office and storage building.

Background and Operating History:

In 1976, Consolidated Chemical Company began pesticide/herbicide production at this facility under National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit #TX0069922, Texas Department of Water Resource (TDWR), a TNRCC predecessor agency, permit #02026 and Solid Waste Registration permit #31171. The company's air emissions were monitored by the Texas Air Control board (TACB), a TNRCC predecessor agency.

In May 1978, a series of phosgene related accidents occurred at the facility, killing one employee and hospitalizing four others. Production at this facility continued until Consolidated Chemical Company went bankrupt in 1978.

In 1978, Hu-Mar Chemical Corporation bought the facility and all permits were transferred to Hu-Mar Chemical Corporation. Pesticide/herbicide production continued at this facility

until they were closed for nuisance odors by the TACB in December 1979. A temporary injunction was obtained by the TDWR against Hu-Mar Chemical Corporation on January 29, 1980, for the improper storage of 190 deteriorating drums at the facility. The facility tried unsuccessfully to reopen in 1980 and was eventually closed in November 1980 by the TACB.

The facility obtained a permit to build a treatment system and discharge into the Tres Palacios Bay, however; no treatment system was ever built. No discharge was ever made under the terms and conditions of the permit (TDWR) permit #02026. The facility relied on surface impoundments for volume reduction of wastewater generated at the facility.

During 1980, as required by the temporary injunction and monitored by the TDWR District 12 office, a removal action was performed by Hu-Mar's contractor. The removal was conducted in two phases: first, the 190 drums containing the chemicals were removed to an approved disposal site; second, the area where spillage from the drums had occurred was checked for depth of seepage, then the contaminated soil was excavated and moved to an approved disposal site. The drums of waste had been stored in the old brick kiln at the plant. After the drums were removed, the kiln was demolished and all contaminated soil/bricks in and near the kiln site were removed. A final inspection on June 30, 1980 was conducted by the TDWR District 12 office.

The phosgene gas cylinders were removed by a Department of Defense contractor in 1982. A closure plan was submitted during 1984. On-site surface impoundments were closed under the supervision of the TDWR in 1985. During the closure activities, the surface impoundments were de-watered by pumping the wastewater onto a diked area adjacent to the surface impoundments. The facility is inactive and underwent closure in 1985.

Contaminated sludges were left in the impoundments and were consolidated with other on-site soils. The impoundments were then capped and vegetated. Onsite tanks were dismantled and sold. Samples collected during 1983 and 1987 from the on-site monitor wells indicated the presence of contaminants attributable to site operations underlying the facility.

In 1988 a limited scope site investigation focused on the collection of groundwater samples from residential wells within a 1/4-mile radius of the site and from the City of Palacios water supply. No on-site samples were collected, nor was the surface water pathway sampled. No contaminants were present in the residential wells or the city water supply which were attributable to site operations.

During June 1998, an expanded site inspection (ESI) was conducted by the TNRCC. The ESI consisted of on-site soil and monitoring well sampling as well as off-site soil, sediment and groundwater samples from residential wells and city water supply wells. No contaminants were present in the residential wells or the city water supply which were attributable to site operations. There were no observed releases to the surface water pathway. There was an observed release to the on-site monitoring wells indicating the presence of contaminants attributable to site operations underlying the facility.

Ownership of the site is in the process of being determined. The Matagorda County Appraisal District and the Palacios Independent School District lists Ramiro Lucio as the owner of record for the site.

In November 1999, the Hu-Mar site was referred to the TNRCC State Superfund Section.

Community Profile

Matagorda County, located on the central Gulf Coast, has an economy supported by petroleum operations, petrochemicals, agribusiness, various manufacturing and tourism.

The Hu-Mar site is located north of the city of Palacios, population 4,395, and is surrounded by farm land with a cotton gin adjacent to the site to the east. The nearest residence is one-quarter mile southeast of the Hu-Mar site.

In 1995 the State Data Center of the Texas Department of Commerce estimated the population of Matagorda County at 37,541, a 1.7% increase from the 1990 U.S. Census estimate. The 1990 ethnicity estimates of Matagorda County by the U.S. Census were: white, 72.1%; black, 13.8%; Hispanic, 24.6%; American Indian, 0.2%; Asian, 2.3% and other 11.6%.

Community Involvement and Concerns

There have been no inquiries by the public regarding the proposal to list the Hu-Mar Chemical site to the state Superfund Registry.

In November 1998, an individual interested in purchasing the Hu-Mar site contacted the TNRCC. The prospective buyer spoke with TNRCC Legal Division and Site Discovery and Assessment staff. TNRCC staff explained the site was, at that time, under investigation for possible referral to the state Superfund program.

Specific Objectives of the Community Relations Program

- A. Maintain open communications between the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission, City of Palacios, Matagorda County and State officials and concerned citizens.
- B. Continue to expand the mailing list to include additional agencies, organizations, and residents that are interested in the project.
- C. Provide a central information contact from whom interested parties can receive information on site activities, project status, and study results.
- D. Provide all information, especially technical findings, in a language that is understandable to the general public and in a form useful to interested citizens and elected officials through the preparation of fact sheets and news releases, when major findings become available during project phases.
- E. Monitor community concerns and information requirements as the project progresses by monitoring the community response to news releases and community meetings.
- F. Modify the community relations plan as changes in community attitudes and needs occur and maintain accuracy during different project phases.

Community Relations Techniques

- A. Project Status Briefings for community groups and concerned citizens (may include public meetings, if needed) - To periodically inform the general community of significant project developments and findings; to respond to inquiries accordingly and incorporate local concerns into the decision making process as appropriate.
- B. Project Mailing List - To provide the means through which press releases, project status reports and other significant communications can be distributed to concerned groups and individuals.
- C. Public Consultations - To conduct informal meetings (if needed) with residents. To provide an opportunity for affected residents to express any concerns and to make inquiries to insure effective two-way communication.
- D. Program Document Repositories - To maintain easily accessible repositories through which the public may review project outputs. The public will be periodically informed of the availability of project documents and the location of repositories via techniques A through C.
- E. TNRCC State Superfund Internet Homepage - provide current, timely information on state Superfund activities on the World Wide Web at the following web address: www.tnrcc.state.tx.us/permitting/remed/superfund
- F. Revise CRP - To reflect changes in site activities or local concerns. After the Proposed Remedial Action Document (PRAD) has been issued, the CRP will be revised to address implementation of the selected remedial action alternative.

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