

REFLECTIONS... AND HOW



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ter and reflects on past successes and looks into the future exploring new products.

Roger Sorenson, a retired Blooming Prairie High School English teacher, is chief facilitator for the group. It is his responsibility to keep the meeting moving and focused. Plant manager David Price could be said to be the internal facilitator.

Members of the Arkema CAP represent all perspectives including employees, high school students, educators and local residents.

Panel members are: Mohamed Kazeml, Alison Pryor, Elijah Baker, David Price, David Pfeifer, Donna Maixner, Dawn Gross, Sandy Bass, Gary Thorson, Burt Knutson, Roger Sorenson, Loan Trinh and Ricky Soto.

All meetings are open to the public and begin at 6 p.m. and go not much longer than an hour.

On the evening I attended, the group took a two-page, 14-question survey designed by Price and his other company leaders. The survey was designed to determine the effectiveness of the current CAP meeting system and to identify possible im-

provements to the meetings going forward.

Group members were also challenged to each produce three topics they would like to further discuss in the future. Some of the more popular suggestions for topics were: Arkema community involvement; outside speakers in related interests; speakers from other Arkema plants; new products and robotics.

Price announced to the group that a drill will be staged on a day in mid-October. It will involve the local fire department, police department and ambulance service. Arkema's entire emergency response team will be involved in the drill.

"It will be organized chaos and my job that day will be to tell you what is going on," Price said. He said the plant's water cannons will be used to shoot water into tank forms.

Price also said that he hopes to arrange a plant tour for key emergency personnel.

A long agricultural history has followed operations at Arkema, Inc. of Blooming Prairie.

The site of Arkema, a global chemical company located at the south side of the city, can be

traced to a creamery that operated from the early 1900s to 1969.

Since its eventual location provided access to soybeans, its main product necessary to produce its many specialty products, Arkema chose to locate in Blooming Prairie. The location also provided access to rail and boasted a proximity to customers.

Arkema's chemical plant produces over two dozen finished products. These products are manufactured by chemically bonding oxygen to unsaturated bonds found in natural vegetable oils, such as soybean, linseed or other olefinic oils. This bonding causes changes in the physical appearance and chemical properties of the oils, making them more suitable for industrial use. Arkema's highest volume product is epoxidized soybean oil.

Epoxidized soybean oil and epoxidized linseed oil are primarily used for imparting flexibility, strength and ultraviolet stability to polyvinyl chloride resin formulations.

Arkema also produces other specialty epoxides, which are used in lubricating oil formulations, plastic formulations, and



Staff photo by Howard Lestrud

David Price, plant manager for Arkema, looks into the future with his Arkema Citizens Advisory Panel. He gives an update of plant projects to members of the citizens group. The group meets monthly at the Blooming Prairie City Center. Citizens group member David Pfeifer is at Price's right.

in the cosmetic field, including shampoo, lipstick, and perfume manufacture.

Arkema business leaders should be commended for involving its community in ex-

ploring new avenues to travel in hopes of improving its operation. Other businesses should follow Arkema's example of involving the community in its operations.

Blooming Prairie, for a small community, boasts some very successful and productive business enterprises.

One of those enterprises is Arkema Inc. of Blooming Prairie and it welcomes community input to make the company a stronger one. David Price, plant manager, embraces the suggestions of its citizens advisory panel which has been functioning since May 13, 1993.

The citizens group's mission is outlined in a Mission Statement created at the group's founding in 1993.

On the second Wednesday of every month, the Arkema CAP group meets at the BP City Cen-