



RESILIENT LOUISIANA COMMISSION

Manufacturing Task Force

May 4, 2020

Meeting Called to Order: 3:30 p.m.

Task Force Members Present

- Tommy Fauchaux
- George Swift
- Alta Baker
- Robert Barousse
- Kim Cusimano
- Dr. Shelina Davis
- Nicole Daigle
- Adam Keyes
- Tom Martin
- Janile Parks
- Nick Pestello
- Missy Rogers
- Joe Tanniehill
- Tom Yura

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- Task Force leader Tommy Faucheux of Dow Chemical brought the meeting to order at 3:30 and called roll. He read the memo from Gov. Edwards confirm that the public meeting could proceed even if everyone could not meet in person, due to the global pandemic. Mr. Faucheux introduced new task force member, Dr. Shelina Davis of the Louisiana Public Health Institute.
- Mr. Faucheux called on George Swift of the SWLA Chamber, who wanted to see how manufacturers were doing, what the outlook would be to get back to full strength, and what their current capacity levels were.
- Mr. Faucheux then invited all members to share what their respective companies were facing with the pandemic, acknowledging that though these companies were individuals of many, they were representative of various industry segments and regions. He encouraged participants to share any needs, issues or concerns that they are facing or that may present themselves as Louisiana enters “phase one.”
- Mr. Faucheux provided the Dow Chemical perspective, saying that business has not slowed. Dow, like most of the manufacturers represented in the Task Force, is considered essential, and remains open and running. Capacity it half of a typical order, but the plants need to run in order to stay in business. Regarding employees, the biggest concern for them and their families is child care. The regulatory environment is also an important issue for the company.
- Nick Pestello with the Port of Lake Charles said that the Port is still running at 100 percent, but staff has been reduced for safety reasons. Those employees who can work at home are working from home. Child care is also an issue for port staff. Regulatory issues are also important.
- Mr. Faucheux shared with the Task Force that the Legislature opened earlier in the morning.
- Alta Baker of Safe Haven Enterprises shared that moving forward the company may see issues with the supply chain, but they have been very fortunate thus far.

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- Robert Barouse of Elmer Candy said his business is season, but it is still operating at 80 percent since Stay at Home order was issued. Short term appears stable, but long term success depends on when retail bounces back. Childcare is a big issue for employees. Another issue of concern is the pressure from unemployment benefits. He also expressed the need for a clear protocol for the potential instance of employees testing positive for COVID-19, and the legal issues that may follow.
- Kim Cusimano of Sasol says that the company operations are moving forward, including the construction of a mega project, which is near completion. The company is operating according to its planned output. The company took measures to allow those who could work from home to do so, and the company plans to be conservative on bringing back employees who are working from home. She is pleased with the interaction with State officials.
- Dr. Shelina Davis of the Louisiana Public Health Institute says that the staff has been working remotely for several weeks. As a public health group, they are discussing how they can develop policies to support their partners in phase one, including guidance on everything from child care to protocols of returning to an office space. The organization is also supporting residents with social health and mental needs.
- Nicole Daigle of BASF said that half of employees who can work from home are doing so. Currently, plans for returning to the office include a run-up of three to four months. Top priority is health and safety of employees, and the company is putting protocols in place to minimize exposure for employees currently on site: six feet distancing, masks are required, and the company is providing those masks to employees. Current issues include workforce issues, child care and regulatory certainty.
- Adam Kiaser of Valero said the company is operating throughout, making sure employees are maintaining social distancing. The company is supporting employees who are working remotely, and it is providing extra sanitation for the facility between shifts. Also cites regulatory certainty as a key issue.

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- Janile Parks, representing Formosa, stated that the company chose to pause its early works project – a \$9.4 billion plant. The company procured PPE for all contractors and subcontractors. The key concern for the company was to flatten the curve and ensure health and safety of employees is maintained.
- Missy Rogers of Noble Plastics said the company is maintaining operations as it is deemed essential. Office workers are working remotely, but the facility allows employees to be on site while still practicing social distancing. Currently does not have enough PPE for visitors. Everyone on the staff is positive about pulling together. The current focus is on a safe return to work.
- Joe Tanniehill of Steel Fabricators of Monroe said that they've had a backlog of work through September, but the issue is that some employees are staying home because they are scared. Workers are needed, and the company may have to increase length of shifts. The company instituted sanitation policies. Company is encouraging all employees to wear masks; participation slow but improving. Volume of estimating is down.
- Tom Yura of Cornerstone Chemical said that office workers are working from home. A big concern for employees coming back in Phase 1 is child care. Another concern is a reoccurrence, and how does a company sustain screening, providing PPE, deep cleaning efforts. Preparation for Hurricane season is also front of mind.
- Mr. Faucheu then introduced Scott Whelchel, Chief Security Officer of Dow Chemical company who provided some guidance on how the company has handled the pandemic. Stating that all emergencies are local, the company put into place plans for a pandemic, which were created in the early 2000s. The plan had several principles: Adhere to corporate values, placing highest priority on health and safety of employees; Work to ensure that workforce is physically and emotionally available; Act with caring compassion and concern, and to acknowledge that any plan requires adaptation and the ability to adjust as changes occur.
- Mr. Faucheu then turned the meeting over to questions from Task Force members.

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- Joe Tanniehill asked if anyone has done any research into facial thermal scanning to check temperatures. Tommy encouraged him to connect afterward.
- Mr. Faucheux also pointed out that Kentucky has clarity issues regarding face mask usage, which is causing problems among businesses. He suggests that the state should provide guidance on what should be done, and who has authority to drive this issue in particular businesses.
- He further tasked the members to ask other manufacturers who either are or have the ability to manufacture PPE for others.
- He shared that he received a request from the IT and Communications task force for participants in a cross-task force interview, and sought volunteers. George Swift, Missy Rogers, Tom Yura volunteered.
- Tommy motioned to adjourn the meeting, Mr. Tanniehill seconded.
- **Meeting adjourned at 4:42 p.m.**

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