This has been a very stressful time.
The death of our brother Tim Underwood at the HollyFrontier refinery in El Dorado is heavy on our hearts. Our thoughts and prayers go out to his family and coworkers in this difficult time. For anyone interested in donating in Tim’s memory, his wife requested that donations be made to the Wounded Warrior Project in Tim’s name.

The hurricane and water damage to our members’ homes and property in Texas, Florida and the Caribbean have been beyond anything in recent memory. This will be a long recovery process and any contributions you would like to make will be greatly appreciated. Donations can be made to:

United Steelworkers Charitable and Educational Fund, 60 Boulevard of the Allies, Pittsburgh, Pa. 15222 or USW District 13 Council, PO Box 490, Gonzales, La. 70737 (specify disaster relief on the check). The District 13 relief fund will go only to District 13 members affected by Hurricane Harvey.

Our members have stepped up their efforts to help out fellow members who were impacted by the storm. Also, several of our employers, Shell and Total, have taken great steps to help our members. At times like this when people need help, it’s great to see us working together.

The revised Process Safety Management (PSM) standard goes into effect in California the first of October, and we are already struggling with some companies on upcoming compliance. Hopefully, we can work through these issues. The union was at the table during the entire rule-making process, and we understand quite well the language and intent of the new regulation.

Our councils continue to build unity and strength, and are discovering that working together is a better way to address company changes rather than locals doing it individually. There is strength in numbers.

In solidarity,
Kim Nibarger
NOBP Chair
knibarger@usw.org
(Office) 412-562-2403

Dear Brothers and Sisters,
It’s important to get this newsletter into the hands of all of our oil members. Please copy The OilWorker and hand it out to your fellow members during non-work times (breaks, lunch, before and after work) in non-work areas (breakrooms, lunchrooms, plant gates, entrances into the plant). Also, if you have the home email addresses of your members, please email The OilWorker to them. In addition, please post The OilWorker to your own and your local’s Facebook and web pages and to the union bulletin boards in the plant. Thank you for all your support and help!

Lynne Hancock, The OilWorker editor, lhancock@usw.org
Beginning Oct. 1, 2017 California’s new improvements to process safety management (PSM) and hazard prevention take effect at the state’s 19 oil refineries.

The new protections focus on anticipating, preventing and responding to refinery hazards that can harm workers and the surrounding communities.

“This is the most protective regulation in the nation for the safety and health of refinery workers and surrounding communities,” said California Department of Industrial Relations (DIR) Director Christine Baker. “This new regulation will ensure California’s oil refineries are operated with the highest levels of safety possible and with injury and illness prevention in mind.”

The DIR Occupational Safety and Health Standards Board last May approved the new refinery safety order to strengthen workplace safety and health.

Health and Safety Requirements
The elements in the revised PSM regulation require refinery employers to:

- Conduct damage mechanism reviews for processes that result in equipment or material degradation. Physical degradation, such as corrosion and mechanical wear, are common technical causes of serious process failures.
- Conduct a hierarchy of hazard controls analysis to implement the most effective safety measures when considering competing demands and costs when correcting hazards.
- Implement a human factors program, which requires analysis of human factors such as staffing levels, training and competency, fatigue and other effects of shift work, and the human-machine interface.
- Develop, implement and maintain written procedures for the management of organizational change to ensure that plant safety remains consistent during personnel changes.
- Utilize root cause analysis when investigating any incident that results in, or could have reasonably resulted in, a major incident.
- Perform and document a process hazard analysis of the effectiveness of safeguards that apply to particular processes and identify, evaluate and control hazards associated with each process.
- Understand the attitudes, beliefs, perceptions and values that employees share in relation to safety and evaluate responses to reports of hazards by implementing and maintaining an effective process safety culture assessment program.

What Prompted New Standards?
Motivation for amending the California OSHA refinery worker safety regulations and the California Accidental Release Prevention program resulted from the Aug. 6, 2012 hydrocarbon release and fire at Chevron’s refinery in Richmond, Calif.

An 8-inch steel pipe ruptured due to severe sulfidation corrosion, and had a low concentration of silicon, which is used to prevent corrosion. The pipe was connected to a crude oil distillation column, and employees were trying to determine the source of a gas oil leak in the pipe when it erupted, and a fire and chemical release ensued. Gas oil is a combustible hydrocarbon liquid.

Luckily, no one died, but six workers sustained minor injuries and 15,000 people in the community sought medical attention for respiratory problems.

Following a directive from California Governor Jerry Brown’s July 2013 report on refinery safety, CalEPA formed an Interagency Task Force on Refinery Safety in August 2013. The task force, which had members from local, state and national agencies, consulted with workers (including the USW), industry, non-governmental organizations, communities and local agencies over the next several years.

The task force’s key recommendations as well as the U.S. Chemical Safety Board’s (CSB) 2013 investigation report formed the basis for the new regulations.

CSB chairperson Vanessa Allen Sutherland endorsed the new rules and said they were “an example of the CSB driving chemical safety change.”

Some Rules Already Implemented
DIR said that most refineries in California have adopted some of the health and safety requirements over the past decade, and have seen significant improvement in their safety performance. But the major incidents that have (continued on page 3)
Process Safety Rules Help Protect Workers, Community

happened posed a risk to workers and nearby communities, and caused disruption to fuel services. The new regulation represents a comprehensive safety performance standard for the state’s refining sector.

In addition, the California Environmental Protection Agency approved the strengthening of the California Accidental Release Prevention program, designed to prevent the accidental release of hazardous substances that could harm public health and the environment.

The USW welcomes the new rules to improve health and safety.

Mike Smith, a Local 5 staff representative and employee of the Chevron Richmond refinery, told the media:

“Richmond could have been much worse—a lot of people could have died—and we took the lessons from that fire to heart in fighting for these new rules.”

“We are pleased that the state has taken a lead role on refinery health and safety, and are hopeful other states with a refining sector will follow,” said Kim Nibarger, head of the union’s National Oil Bargaining Program.

“These practices will hold refiners accountable to worker and public safety, and will create a cleaner environment because there will be fewer emissions, flaring, spills, fires and explosions.

“The cost to comply is small when compared to the lives saved and the catastrophic incidents avoided,” he added.

Local 241 Member Dies After HollyFrontier Fire

A Local 241 member died Sept. 4 in the hospital after he sustained severe burns in a Labor Day explosion/fire at the HollyFrontier refinery in El Dorado, Kan.

Tim Underwood, 52, had second-and third-degree burns over 80 percent of his body following the explosion, according to newspaper reports.

Local 241 President Robert Cammarn said he was in the reformer unit when the flame went out in the furnace where the gas vapors are heated to extract different types of fuel. Underwood, an outside operator, was asked to check it out.

A tube failed in the furnace and a fire ensued.

Cammarn said two other outside operators tried to help Underwood, who was about 30 feet away from the blast. Underwood was taken to a Wichita, Kan., hospital where he passed away the next day.

The USW sent in Michael Weibel, a worker from the Goodyear plant in Topeka, Kan., to investigate. Weibel is the USW’s Goodyear safety, health and environment coordinator.

OSHA also is investigating the incident. Weibel said the reason for the pipe failure is still being determined.

The local also called in the USW Emergency Response Team (ERT).

Cammarn praised Weibel, ERT and the International for their assistance and support.

“Duronda Pope from ERT spent time with the local and made herself available to us,” he said. “ERT is special. When tragedy hit, Al McDougal and ERT were there; they quickly helped us.

“The impact to our local is emotional, knowing that it could have been any number of us who suffered this tragedy.

“District 11Director Emil Ramirez and Kim Nibarger with the National Oil Bargaining Program went above and beyond in helping me deal with this.

“The USW has been there for Tim’s family, co-workers, and especially those workers who were on shift when the incident occurred,” he said.

Remembering Brother Underwood

Underwood worked 20 years at the El Dorado refinery, and was a steward for five years in the reformer unit, Cammarn said.

“He tried to do the right thing for our members, even if it meant telling them they had no grievance. As a steward, he was straightforward. If he thought you were wrong, he would explain it. He was the kind of guy you wanted to earn his respect. Rarely was there a cross word from him.

“We’re a family there in that unit. All of us used to go out and do things together. Tim had a wonderful sense of humor and he would make sure everybody would laugh.

“Tim was a family man. His 14-year-old son, Tucker, was his life. Tim took him to every 80s band and would get him backstage to get pictures with the band. He loved 80s music, and he loved visiting Italy and Florida.

“We’re all going through the stages of grief. Through the incident investigation, we’re getting closer to the acceptance part,” Cammarn said.

Underwood leaves behind a wife, Vanessa; son, Tucker; and adult children, Ashley, Kris and Erik.

Mrs. Underwood requests that donations be made in Brother Underwood’s honor to Wounded Warrior Project. Underwood was a U.S. Army veteran.

To donate to Wounded Warrior Project, go to: https://www.woundedwarriorproject.org/donate
Every horrific natural disaster has a positive underside: People go out of their way to help others get their lives back together. Hurricane Harvey was no exception.

The storm affected thousands of USW members and their families from Corpus Christi, Texas, to Lake Charles, La. The logistics of getting help to everyone may seem overwhelming, but the USW sprang into action immediately.

USW members took their personal boats and rescued others in the community. District 13 and the International used social media to request financial donations and supplies. Companies donated funds and supplies as well.

“We have had an amazing response from locals throughout District 13 that have donated and delivered supplies for their Brothers and Sisters,” said John Link, Assistant to District 13 Director Ruben Garza. “On top of working and caring for their families, our local union leaders and members are pulling together to get the word out about assistance and to help one another in this difficult time.”

The District 13 office in Baytown, Texas, was fine, but water flooded the homes of administrative assistants Carol Boggs, Yesenia Alfaro and Janelle Johnson.

At first, financial donations and supplies were gathered at the District 13 Sub-District 3 office in Baton Rouge, La., which had not received damage. The relief effort expanded to Texas and Louisiana locals not affected by the flooding. In addition to the International’s fund, USW District 13 Council also set up a fund to help District 13 members impacted by the storm (see Kim Nibarger’s column for the address).

Below is a partial list of the following locals that contributed money and supplies as of Sept. 9:
- USW District 13 Council
- USW Local 1148 Texarkana
- USW Local 895 Dallas/Fort Worth
- USW Local 620 Gonzales, La.
- USW Local 750 Norco, La.
- USW Local 13-12 Baton Rouge, La.
- USW Sub-District 3 Office, Baton Rouge, La.

**Additional Support**

At the Women of Steel Level II training on Sept. 12-13 at the Local 620 hall in Gonzales, La., attendees brought supplies and donations for the Harvey relief effort.

Members from Local 620 collected and delivered two trailers of supplies on Sept. 20 to the Local 13-836 hall in Orange, Texas for members affected by the hurricane and flooding. Local 620 also cooked for the members in the Orange area that day and helped with cleanup at the Local 13-836 hall.

Local 13-447 headed to Local 228 in Port Neches, Texas, on Sept. 20 with supplies, and the local cooked for union members in that area who received storm damage.

Local 750 brought supplies to Local 227 in Pasadena, Texas, and cooked for the members in the area.

Link thanked District 13 Women of Steel Coordinator Dianne Babin, Local 620 President Jordy Richardson, Local 13-447 President John Gros, and Local 750 President Marty Poche for making the Sept. 20 events possible.
USW Locals Collect Supplies for Hurricane Harvey

As of Sept. 5, the following local union halls opened up to assist our members affected by Hurricane Harvey. Also, supplies were delivered there:

Local 13-1, 2327 Texas Ave. Texas City, coordinator Larry Burchfield, 409-771-0635
Local 227, 704 East Pasadena Freeway, Pasadena, Texas, coordinator Marcos Velez, 832-640-4301
Local 13-2001 311 South Highway 146, Baytown, Texas, coordinator Ben Lilienfeld, 832-373-9754
Local 13-423, 1500 Jefferson Dr., Port Arthur, Texas, Hoot Landry, 409-548-0153

As of Sept. 5, the following two locals, as well as locals in Orange, Evadale and Silsbee, Texas, were picking up supplies from the other USW halls for their members as needed because floodwaters were still present:

Local 13-243, 2490 South 11th Street, Beaumont, Texas 77701, Hoot Landry, 409-548-0153
Local 228, 1609 Port Neches Avenue, Port Neches, Texas 77651 Rick Erpelding 337-348-9442

In addition, supplies were delivered to:

USW Baton Rouge Sub-District Office, 5723 Superior Drive, Suite B-1, Baton Rouge, LA 70816
USW Local 13-895, 3626 Marvin D Love Freeway, Dallas, TX 75224-4449.

The following supplies are still needed and can be delivered to the above addresses: