TRAIL BLAZER
ExxonMobil hires first woman shift superintendent

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plays critical role

CEDAR PORT
adds new businesses

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donates supplies to storm-stricken area
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Welcome to the October issue of Greater Baytown.

ExxonMobil celebrates hiring Dedrea Leal as first female shift supervisor (page 4) and we learn how much ExxonMobil continues to do for the communities they serve including donating supplies to victims of Hurricane Laura (page 35).

We learn about the critical role the Baytown Airport plays in transporting not only pilots and business owners, but many physicians to serve in our local medical facilities and even the governor from time to time. See Matt Hollis’ story, page 6.

Two local young men decided to treat veterans to some deep sea fishing. See Alan Dale’s story, page 8.

Covestro has a lot of good news including celebrating Emerging Leader Awardee Kayleigh Hogan (page 12), no recordable incidents in their Process Analyzer Technology group (page 16), and scholarships (page 31).

We get updates from Port Houston on how COVID-19 has affected business (page 21) and how an underwater drone is scooping up litter at the port (page 22).

Thank you for reading.

Carol Skewes

On the cover

ExxonMobil hit a milestone when they recently hired Dedrea Leal as the first female shift superintendent in the plant. She began as a process operator in 1999 and has held many jobs at ExxonMobil since her journey began at Lee College.
In her 21-year career, Dedra Leal has achieved many things while working at ExxonMobil’s Baytown facilities where she was hired as a process technician in 1999. Her latest accomplishment, however, is a true historic milestone. As of Sept. 1, 2020, Dedra became the first female shift superintendent in the 100-year history of ExxonMobil in the Baytown Area.

Leal’s journey began at Lee College where she obtained a Process Technology Certification before starting her career at the Baytown Olefins Plant. “I have held several positions at the Olefins Plant including recovery operator, console operator, shift supervisor, mechanical coordinator, process coordinator, process department training lead, and project execution and turnaround supervisor,” said Leal. She also joined the Olefins Plant’s Emergency Services Organization on the Fire Team and was a member for eight years.

In her new role, Leal will have the opportunity to use her skills to develop new leaders and be resourceful. “I appreciate the challenge that comes with the position to drive improvements in the organization. I will be looking for opportunities to share knowledge and improve our work processes and tools,” said Leal.

When it comes to leadership, Leal views her function as servicing her team and providing them with everything they need in order to succeed. “The process of developing people, increasing one’s competence, and helping others gain confidence in being the team ‘go-to person’ that can handle any situation that arises is very rewarding to me,” she said.

When she reflects on becoming the first female shift superintendent, Leal is thoughtful and humble. Throughout her career she has made an effort not to differentiate herself for the sake of trying to fit in to the mostly male work population. “I always felt like I could do the job as equally as anyone. I was surrounded by great people who were instrumental in my training and gave me opportunities to succeed and, at times, fail! They never treated me different nor gave me any doubts that I belonged,” she said. She worked hard and continually contributed to her team’s successes.

“While celebrating this milestone, I feel encouraged that others can see my story and be motivated. I am glad that ExxonMobil gave me a chance,” Leal said. “I remember that ‘young lady’ who had so much to learn and so much energy. I remember the desire to be the go-to girl to help save the plant if the need ever were to arise. I remember thinking that someday I’ll be the shift team leader or the process coordinator. Now, 20 years in, I’m honored to take the shift superintendent role, and I hope my leadership within the organization can inspire, empower, and lead change.”
By Matt Hollis

Since 1958, Baytown Airport has served the area, having a positive impact on local citizens and industries as well as helping those in need of medical services thanks to it being a base for Life Flight on the east side of Houston.

Its single, 4,334-foot, 60 foot wide asphalt runway allows for thousands of general aviation aircraft operations with an average over 25 per day. It is privately-owned by Raceco, Inc., which is operated by the Angel Brothers.

With its proximity to Houston as well as Port Houston, Baytown Airport can service the area in multiple ways. Charles Danley, who serves as the airport's manager, described what type of aircraft fly into the airport.

"We have all types of planes come into Baytown from twin-engine turboprops to heavy corporate three-engine jets," Danley said. "Many businesses outside of the city use the Baytown Airport when they come in to check on their facilities in or around the east side of Houston. For example, Love's Truck Stops uses the Baytown Airport. Companies that service the chemical plants such as Exxon and Chevron use it to bring in company executives or equipment for their plant."

Danley, a pilot himself for over 40 years, said doctors fly in to the airport from other cities to perform procedures at area hospitals.

In addition, some companies provide daily aerial services for pipelines. They operate out of Baytown every day to inspect the thousands of pipelines that run all over the Texas-Louisiana area, according to Danley.

"As you can see, it is a very diverse group of people that use general aviation airports," he said.

Danley said a general aviation airport does not have airline traffic from companies such as Southwest Airlines, United and other big airline names. w
FLYING UNDER THE RADAR

BAYTOWN AIRPORT

FLYING UNDER THE RADAR
“If you do not receive commercial airline into your airport like IAH or Hobby, everything is listed as a general aviation airport, except for Ellington since it is military,” Danley said.

Danley said you never know who you will see at the airport.
“(Texas Gov. Greg Abbott) flew into the Baytown Airport a few months ago,” Danley said. “We have had TV stars use the airport, Duck Dynasty’s Si Robertson came in, and there have been other famous folks over the years. We have a lot of people who come through the airport, not just a bunch of private individuals that fly only on Saturdays and Sundays. It is an active airport. It is used by lots of different folks for lots of different purposes.”

Danley said currently there are 60 aircraft based at the Baytown Airport.

“We have two corporate jets, three helicopters, three corporate twin-engine turboprop aircraft, many twin-engine and single-engine aircraft are based at Baytown,” Danley said.

Since 2009, the airport has been the home to Life Flight, which has its east base set up on the site.

“Life Flight’s east base serves all of the northeast to the southeast side of Houston, including the Beaumont area,” Danley said. “The Life Flight at the Baytown Airport is a 24/7 operation. It has three Life Flight staff also on duty 24/7 with one pilot and two nurses.”

“If you are in a car wreck on I-10 and are severely injured and need to be in a hospital and surgery fast, Life Flight is the one to call,” Danley said. “Life Flight is important to most people that live in the Houston area.”

Danley said there are four Life Flight bases around Houston, and it covers about 200 nautical miles around the city.

Danley was instrumental in getting Life Flight to come to Baytown.

“They were looking for a site, and we offered it to them,” he said. “We built a base for them inside the hangar. It is like a three-bedroom home. It has workrooms in it, a kitchen area, and more. It is a house inside of the hangar. We donated the facilities to them. Mattress Mac provided their furniture, other people and companies donated things to them. We are excited for us to have their east base here. It is a great thing for Baytown and the surrounding areas.”

Although other Texas airports are listed in a Texas Department of Transportation study showing their economic impact, Danley explained that Baytown Airport is privately-owned and receives no money from that organization or the City of Baytown.

“We abide by all FAA regulations,” he said. “When we redid the airport, we refurbished the airport around 2008 and put in a longer runway, and a new lighting system, drainage and new office, and put new hangars. We spent a lot of money on the airport, all of the money was Angel Brothers’ money, not TxDOT or city money.”

Danley said the importance of Baytown Airport to the nearby citizens is evident. “Not only for the economic impact but for the life-saving services it provides for our communities on a daily basis, Danley said.

Danley said in the near future, there are plans to build more hangars.

“That is always a possibility, but it depends on demand,” he said. “And we looked at building another large hangar, but COVID-19 has delayed things.

“We will probably build the big hangar in 2021.”
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HUNT SOUTHWEST REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT BREAKS GROUND ON 1M-SF SPEC INDUSTRIAL BUILDING IN CEDAR PORT

Dallas-based Hunt Southwest Real Estate Development has broken ground on a 1-million-square-foot speculative industrial project in Baytown. The company said the project was driven, in part, by the surge in online retail sales amid the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic.

The building, dubbed the Cedar Port Trade Center, is located within the massive TGS Cedar Port Industrial Park near the intersection of FM 1405 and Borusan Road. The industrial park is home to distribution centers for Amazon, Home Depot, Ikea and Walmart, among other tenants.

Hunt Southwest Real Estate Development’s new facility will feature 40-foot clear height, LED warehouse lighting, ESFR sprinkler system and expansive parking for cars and trailers, according to a news release. The facility will also feature 25 acres of additional adjacent land, which will allow for future expansion of the building to 1.3 million square feet or for the addition of vehicle/trailer parking or outside storage, the company said.

“COVID-19 has accelerated the shift from bricks-and-mortar retail sales to e-commerce and fulfillment, and it’s the large users that are actively signing leases in this environment,” Hunt Southwest President Preston Herold said in the release. “Yet the capital markets and spec development community have not adapted quickly enough to meet the requirements of these larger e-commerce/fulfillment users. As a result, these larger users have had to resort to the time-consuming, build-to-suit route. We are deploying our entrepreneurial capital to take advantage of this market inefficiency and provide immediately occupiable, state-of-the-art space to these large users.”

Hunt Southwest Real Estate Development has tapped Houston-based Powers Brown Architecture to design the project and Houston’s E.E. Reed Construction to serve as general contractor. CBRE’s Jason Dillee and Nathan Wynne are the leasing agents for Cedar Port Trade Center.

The building is scheduled to be delivered in March 2021. Cedar Port Industrial Park has been called the largest rail- and barge-served industrial park in the United States. The industrial park spans 15,000 acres, with more than 10,000 acres available for development.

The industrial park has continued to grow rapidly since Trans-Global Solutions formed a partnership that purchased Cedar Port Industrial Park in December 2014. Houston-based real estate developer Welcome Group purchased 23 acres in the park for future development earlier this summer. Also this year, High Street Logistics Properties paid an undisclosed amount to acquire the Cedar Crossing Distribution Center, a 129,527-square-foot property in the park, from Denver-based Mountain West Industrial Properties and Galveston-based American National Insurance Co.

In November, The Woodlands-based NIT Industrial paid an undisclosed sum to acquire a 151,260-square-foot distribution center in the industrial park from Boston-based Stag Industrial. Also last year, an entity affiliated with NIT Industrial acquired 12.8 acres within the Cedar Port Industrial Park. At the time, the company said it planned to build a four-building spec project with 204,000 square feet of leasable space.
Energy Transfer has announced the completion of its Lone Star Express pipeline expansion project in Texas.

The 352-mile pipeline expansion was designed to move natural gas liquids from the Delaware and Permian basins in New Mexico and West Texas to fractionators at Energy Transfer's Mont Belvieu facility.

The expansion adds about 400,000 barrels of NGL capacity per day. It runs from near Wink in Winkler County to Morgan Junction in Bosque County where it connects to the existing Lone Star Express Pipeline south of Fort Worth.

The new pipeline is 24 inches in diameter.

The expansion project was a key element of the Dallas-based company's 2020 capital spending budget. It was completed on budget and ahead of schedule, the company said.

The project will provide shippers with additional connectivity out of the Delaware and Permian basins and further encourage the recovery of production and jobs in the region, it said.

The company's fractionators at Mont Belvieu are able to process more than 900,000 barrels per day with the completion of Energy Transfer's seventh fractionator.
By Preslie Cox

Covestro Baytown employee Kayleigh Hogan was selected as a recipient for the “Women in Manufacturing STEP Ahead Award,” presented by the Manufacturing Institute. The STEP Ahead Awards are part of the larger STEP Ahead initiative and honor women in the manufacturing industry who have exhibited leadership and excellence in their careers and represent all measures of the industry.

Of the 130 award recipients, Hogan was among 30 to be recognized as an Emerging Leader, a category to honor women under the age of 30 who have achieved unique accomplishments at the start of their careers. All of the award winners will be honored during a virtual awards ceremony September 24.

“I’m truly humbled to join the STEP Ahead network and to be in the company of so many inspiring women in our industry,” said Hogan. “For me, this award represents not what I’ve accomplished, but the many ways that women have and will continue to impact the future of manufacturing.”

Hogan is an asset engineer at the Baytown Industrial Park, where her innovative approach to problem-solving has played a key role in developing business-critical projects that improve the overall efficiency and reliability at the Baytown site.

In addition to her day-to-day responsibilities, Hogan also serves as one of the youngest members of the site’s Emergency Operations Center. She was recruited for her expertise in dispersion modeling—a highly valued skill that allows the EOC team to accurately assess chemical release scenarios, helping first responders prepare to safely manage potential incidents.

The passion and dedication that Kayleigh brings to her day job are reflected in her volunteerism outside the workplace, too. Whether leading the Annual Day of Giving event for her university’s alumni chapter or serving as a United Way ambassador for the site, Hogan is always eager to step up for a good cause. Where she really enjoys spending her time, though, is at the Eddie V. Gray Wetlands Center, teaching fifth-graders how to use a microscope. Kayleigh’s own interest in science was sparked at a young age, inspired by parents who both led successful careers in STEM. In their honor, Hogan now ignites that same spark for generations to come, helping students discover the joy of science through hands-on learning.

“I’m incredibly pleased to see Kayleigh’s contributions spotlighted on the national stage. Her leadership, both in the plant and in the community, is well deserving of the recognition – and the Baytown site couldn’t be more proud,” said Baytown Site Manager and Senior Vice President Demetri Zervoudis.
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The Process Analyzer Technology (PAT) group at Covestro Baytown recently celebrated a noteworthy milestone – 21 years of no recordable incidents. This group was founded in 1999; this means that they have never had a recordable.

The group has worked to achieve this significant milestone amid turnarounds, demanding workloads to complete numerous projects and routine maintenance required to sustain safe and reliable operations at the Baytown site.

The following is an interview on the achievement conducted by the Baytown Communications team with group head Process Analyzer Technology, Gerard Gomis and Jaime Ramirez, PAT supervisor.

How was this safety milestone achieved?

The PAT team in Baytown was founded in 1999. Since the beginning the team has shown a great work ethic and communication that has helped us to get up to day with no recordable.

Safety has always been our first priority; everybody in the team takes individual responsibility in terms of safety.

The communication has been a key factor of this achievement. We continuously share knowledge and experiences: technical, procedures, safety telegrams from around the world, etc. We want to make sure that everybody in the team knows our workplace, our equipment and is aware of any risk that we may encounter.

This communication happens in two different ways. As a team we have our recurrent safety meetings, where this exchange of information happens in an official and organized way to make sure we cover all safety topics along the year. And the second way is through our safety culture. The team has created an environment where this exchange of information happens naturally and continuously. Our major effort as a team is to make sure this safety culture transfers from one generation to the next one, to the new engineer, to the new technician, etc.

What kind of work/experience exactly goes into achieving this kind of milestone?

Teaching the dangers associated with the jobs and also the ways to keep yourself from getting in the line of fire. We ask new trainees to help explain how they would perform the job prior to ever letting them go out in the field by themselves; we always try to have a more experience technician helping them and teaching the new personnel the job and share their experience.

What are some challenges the team has faced and overcome to achieve this?

Some of the challenges we have faced as our continuous evolving PAT group would be, many new faces with little to no experience in our BTN Chemical plant. Always explaining the rules and procedure that we have in place and make them aware of the possible dangers in the plant along with explaining the instruments/analyzers and procedures we have in place to keeps us safe and out of harm’s way. In a way, we also get to learn from new personnel that not everyone is always as confident or comfortable with the chemical aspect of being in a plant where dangerous scenarios can arise, yet with taking the time to explain the safety items/details kind of helps soothe the troubled mind.

Is there anything new the team plans to implement to uphold this safety record?

We are continuously looking for ways to improve, not only in safety, also in reliability and efficiency for example.

In terms of safety, this year we are focusing on two main points:

• Training. Our team is experiencing a generation change, in the beginning of the year one of our most experienced technicians retired with more than 40 years of knowledge on his back and another technician will retire next year with the same experience. This is a lot of knowledge that we are trying to keep within the team in different ways, but training the newer technicians or engineers is one of them. As an example, we are working with a new technology (virtual reality glasses) that is going to allow us to train our people using them, with the glasses attached to the hard hat, technicians and engineers are going to be able to go over procedures and documentation in general but also see training videos on how to perform day to day activities, previously recorded and edited.

• Culture. This is a continuous team effort. We need to keep that level of excellence. Complacency is our enemy in here.

What have been important learnings to uphold this achievement?

Share as much knowledge to one another from every aspect of our jobs, especially pointing out the difficulties or dangers associated. Be understanding and patient, try not to get tired or frustrated in teaching or explain things to people who are not familiar with things, remember we were all there at one time in our lives. Listening, listening to everyone’s thoughts and opinions and make sure to keep everyone engaged as well.

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All around the world, people are wearing face masks in order to reduce the risk of transmitting the coronavirus. This healthcare guideline inspired U.S. employees to promote safety while adding a creative twist—a face mask design contest among the region was born and encouraged employees to get curious, courageous and colorful with their ideas.

During a country-wide competition, employees were challenged to create a Covestro mask design, using the colors and values of Covestro as their source of inspiration. The response was impressive, with employees submitting 30 creative mask designs for consideration and 622 employees voting for their favorite mask. Covestro leadership then judged the top three masks based on creativity, brand compliance and popularity in order to select the top mask design.

The winner of the Covestro LLC mask design competition was an employee from the Newark, Ohio facility.

Two Baytown-based employees’ designs came in second and third.

Vonda Atchley from the site’s procurement department came in second place and drew inspiration from the company’s team-building program, “We Are One,” which is a people-focused initiative that motivates and encourages employees to work together as one team and make a difference.

“I believe that with everyone’s support and commitment, ‘We Are One’ in protecting and caring for each other,” said Atchley. “I wanted my design to reflect this belief in a strong, yet simple way.”

Atchley participated in the design contest because she believes in making people feel calm and relaxed.

“I hoped that by designing a mask, I could bring some harmony to our current situation and remind my colleagues that we are all here to support each other,” said Atchley.
Trainee Sky Cantrell’s design, “Team Attire,” came in third place and was a tribute to everyone on the Covestro team.

“It’s a way to remind us of who we wear this mask for—our teammates and loved ones,” said Cantrell. “This design showcases a pattern created from various symbols that represent different departments within Covestro, with many doubling as indicators of our values.”

“When I read the contest description, I immediately asked myself: ‘What would someone need to say to me to encourage me to wear a mask?’ I immediately answered, ‘We are doing this for our team.’ I also wanted to make sure to represent all of the amazing people I’ve met at Covestro during my short time here—operators, engineers, designers, technicians, managers, procurement personnel, lab personnel and many more.”

The winning design will be shared with employees in a welcome pack when back on-site.

Photo courtesy of Sky Cantrell
Record gate moves and extra loaders are positive signs at Port Houston. Nevertheless, container twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs) at the largest container port on the United States Gulf Coast continued showing coronavirus effects and was down 10% in July. Container TEUs for the first seven months of the year is down just 3% compared to 2019, which was a record year. Of note, container activity is up 8% compared to the same time period in 2018, another record year during its time.

Port Houston handled 234,737 TEUs in July of this year, compared to July of 2019, when a total of 259,993 TEUs were handled. For the full year so far, Port Houston has handled 1,662,546 TEUs, compared to 1,721,402 TEUs for the same period in 2019.

Total tonnage at Port Houston for July was down 6%, with steel, breakbulk cargo and autos all down compared to July of last year, although grain and bulk cargo again showed increases, as they did in June.

A recent uptick in activity included two record days for truck transactions at the Barbours Cut Container Terminal in July. “Our team at the Barbours Cut Container Terminal processed more than 4,000 transactions each day, moving this cargo efficiently through our gates and into stores and homes,” Executive Director Roger Guenther said.

Another positive sign, Port Houston received one extra loader in July to handle peak Trans-Pacific volumes and is expecting four more in August. Blank sailings appear to be decreasing in August as well. “These are bright spots we are hopeful will continue,” said Guenther.

Strict safety protocols to avoid the spread of COVID-19 remain in place at our facilities. Port Houston places the health and safety of its workers first and thanks the men and women working on all the private and public docks, driving trucks in and out of the port, and our other maritime transportation workers, who all support the port’s daily functions.
Port Houston is betting a new “Waste Shark” drone can take a serious bite out of the huge problem of litter in the Houston Ship Channel. Port Houston will be the first port with a Waste Shark in the entire United States.

The shark is a large drone with an underwater opening or “mouth” that is capable of snaring hundreds of pounds of waste in a single trip. The machine can easily be deployed by just one or two operators and be launched from shorelines or vessels.

The equipment from RanMarine Technology will be deployed mainly around the site of the Sam Houston pavilion. Lots of litter collects there due to runoff after rains. This litter comes from all over Houston as people toss garbage into streets, bayous, or drains. “Floatables” is the actual pollution term for the trash that winds up in waterways.

The 5x3.5-foot drone can carry more than 350 pounds of trash and has an operational battery life of 16 hours. It also can gather air and water quality data and filter chemicals such as oil and heavy metals out of the water.

Originally tested in the Port of Rotterdam in RanMarine’s native Netherlands, the WasteShark is an emission-free drone that detects waste, chemicals, and even intrusive vegetation and removes it. The drones can hold up to 1,200 pounds of debris before returning to a collection area where it is processed.

Not to be confused with the wrongly vilified apex predators of the sea, the Waste Shark is modeled after the head of the world’s largest fish, the gentle whale shark. Just as a whale shark swims with its mouth open to engulf plankton and small fish, the WasteShark navigates polluted waterways with its “mouth” open to consume garbage.

The drone is large enough to be seen by shipping traffic, although it avoids major shipping lanes. Additionally, birds and fish tend to avoid it just as they would any other seafaring vessel.
Where Are They Now?

Bo Masters

By Alan Dale

One man’s luck became his blessing.

Baytown son Bo Masters was a solid athlete at Robert E. Lee High School back in the 1980s before an injury derailed his hopes of going to a big-time college baseball program.

All that meant for him was a solid career and professional life working for Dow Chemical.

Masters, a 1982 graduate of REL, was a standout baseball and football player for the Ganders, lettering for three and two years respectively.

He dabbled in basketball for two years before football coaches told him to reconsider playing any further on the hardwood.

“If it could be played, I was there,” Masters said.

In baseball, he earned all-district recognition from his sophomore year on as he played first base, the outfield and pitched.

He was a member of the 1981 team that went 13-2 in district competition, losing a playoff to Deer Park to advance to the playoffs.

“It hurt at first because we had to have that playoff game, winner take all,” Masters said. “They beat us 1-0. I led off an inning with a triple and I didn’t score. Our four-hole hitter hit a bomb, but they called it foul.”

His senior year, Masters was courted by some of the bigger collegiate programs in the state before a shoulder injury slowed him down.

“Pitching-wise, me and Paul Barry were probably the top two pitchers in the state,” Masters said. “We both got hurt—I was hurt my last football game as quarterback. I went to some of the best doctors in the world and they just couldn’t fix it. I played, but mentally … I had never gotten hit before. I was so dominant, and I couldn’t deal with the fact I couldn’t strike out everybody.

“It just messed my head up. I struck out a lot of people before that. That was the year we had a shot, if we hadn’t gotten hurt.

Before his injury, Masters went on recruiting trips to Texas and A&M.

“But when I got hurt, they weren’t around anymore,” Masters said.

He and Barry both went to Wharton Junior College and he wrapped his career right there.

“I gave it up,” he said. “I wasn’t what I used to be.”

Masters’ son Dirk also played baseball at Angleton High School and injuries derailed his hopes to play at an upper D1 school but played at Sam Houston State and later Cameron University.

“College sports are brutal,” Masters said. “You get one shot. If you continue to perform, you are fine, but if you mess up, there are kids standing there that are just as good and waiting for that opportunity. If they take advantage of it, you may never get a chance to come back and play.”

Masters went to Lee College for a year and that’s when his story changed.

He began working at Dow Chemical and has been there as of today for 35 years working in the research lab.

“I work with scientists, Ph.D.s, chemists and engineers,” Masters said. “I wasn’t educated at that level. I wanted to play sports. For 35 years they have not known I wasn’t as educated as them. I’ve been able to get away with it for 35 years. It just amazes me.”

Masters, 56, took his finals at Lee and interviewed for a summer job with a contracting company and after a year got hired on with Dow.

“It was just plain luck I guess,” Masters said. “I had worked a lot of construction summer jobs and all the way through high school. When I went to work as a contractor, there was a transition going on between Dow and Upjohn and Dow was fixing to buy Upjohn. The three guys I worked with in that research department were afraid that Dow wouldn’t have research, so they all left to production.

“When Dow bought it, I was the only one standing there that knew how to run it, so they had to hire me.”

Masters works on finding ways to improve...
plants and builds scale models to run experiments through them to see how to improve various processes.

“I think I’m good, I think I made it,” Masters said. “I just got lucky, man. All my life all I thought I was going to do was play professional baseball. My dad (Sammy) groomed me for it, coached the little league teams and won at everything. My sister (Tammie) was already an off-the-chart athlete and played college volleyball.”

Maybe it was luck or just good karma? Masters admitted being a good kid who didn’t get out of line and tried to be kind to people. “Maybe somebody waved a good wand over me,” Masters said. “It turned out good for me.”

Masters has been married for 32 years to wife Carolyn and has son Dirk and daughter Samantha.
Two men, local Tyler Kitchen and Cass Coroiescu, decided to give back to the people who have given Americans a chance to be who they are and live the lives they do. So, Kitchen of Mont Belvieu and Coroiescu of Conroe, organized a small veterans’ fishing trip that went from small, intimate gathering to a full-blown party in Galveston this past July.

Not bad for two men that hadn’t even met before outside of Facebook and had competed against each other in various fishing competitions. We had talked on Facebook several times,” Kitchen said. “He posted that he was offering his boat for six veterans free of charge. That turned into us offering our boat to six or seven veterans free of charge, and that exploded into about 25 boats free of charge to all these veterans and running about 125 veterans into this tournament, Veterans Summer Slam event.”

The fishing trip was a combination of a relaxing excursion and tournament. Kitchen, a 2007 graduate of Barbers Hill High School, said that it was Coroiescu’s idea since he and his mom wanted to give their boat, Coroiescu’s, to veterans to “give back” for their efforts.

Coroiescu’s family escaped Romania during the latter days of its most recent communist regime and Cass wanted to honor those men and women who had fought to provide the lifestyle in America they enjoy.

“The event was supposed to be six veterans in my boat,” Coroiescu said. “We left Romania and made a life for ourselves and got a nice lifestyle. The whole idea at this event is to give back to the men and women that make my lifestyle as an immigrant possible. If I can afford to take veterans fishing—veterans from the front line—we are going to give this opportunity.”

Coroiescu noted that he funded the entire fishing side of the operation.
“These guys have given up four to six years of their lives for you and me to have freedom of speech right now,” Coroiescu said. “And the security that we have. Without them, we wouldn’t have any of this.”

The fishing included snapper, kingfish and others.

“Cass ended up being the founder and me coming in and being the cofounder,” Kitchen said. “They had to have proof of service and then they were on the list and assigned to a boat.”

All together about 125 veterans made the trip.

“Organizing it was not pretty,” Coroiescu said.

The veterans arranged their own trip to Galveston and their own lodging, but the two men arranged a spot on one of the boats where they met at the Galveston Yacht Basin at 5:30 a.m. on July 18.

The response to the event was overwhelming as the veterans showed their gratitude.

“Some of that stuff almost makes you want to tear up,” Kitchen said. “Some of these guys have never done anything like this before and this was their first opportunity to go fishing or offshore fishing. To go out and see these guys catch these big fish—the look on their face when they pull up a 15-pound snapper, it was awesome. One of them jumped up and down like a little kid on Christmas Day. It almost made me tear up looking at this guy.”

U.S. veteran Scooter Cooey, a Spring resident, was pleased to have participated in the event. He headed to Galveston that weekend to see an old veteran buddy and they participated in the event.

“It was an extremely great time and honestly couldn’t have been better,” Cooey said. “It means the world that those guys would do that and put on the entire fishing tournament. We all caught multiple fish and I ended up catching two we kept for the tournament. I most definitely will do it again. I know what it means and feels like to do something like that to spend a day on the water (with other former veterans). I even volunteered to help out in the future.”

Kitchen, an operator at Enterprise Products, sees the event continuing after the success and response of the first one.

“The hard work and sweat was worth it, and I have people hitting me up to do it again,” Coroiescu said. “It’s going to be an annual event.”

Kitchen added that the trips could change to include first responders and others of that kind while keeping it a veteran focused event.

There was mention of getting sponsors for the future event, but no money was accepted from the veterans.

“Not even a tip was allowed,” Kitchen said.
Kristin Sickle works in fundraising, while her husband, Scott, teaches at Sterling High School.

“We got married in 2014. He brought three kids into the marriage. Then we had one together. We share custody of the big kids with their mom. Sometimes we’re a big family of six, and sometimes it’s just the three of us.

“It was pretty scary at first. Most people have kids one by one. You get your sea legs as you go. But for me it was like, OK, where do I fit into this family that already exists? The best thing that could have happened is right before we moved in together, I was laid off. I didn’t work for 9-10 months. So while he taught summer school, it was just me and the kids. We spent a lot of time together. We went to the beach, played board games, watched movies. I credit that summer for the relationships we have now. I had the time to really get to know them.

“It’s been mostly joy. But there’s some heartache that comes with it. It can be a minefield. You don’t always know what you’re going to step on or step into. You don’t know what histories there are. I don’t know their mother. I don’t know what her feelings are going to be on things. So you just kind of do what you can and throw grace on top of it — lots and lots of grace. Especially on yourself when you make mistakes and put your foot in it. You say you’re sorry, and everybody groups together and keeps going.

“I was worried about how they would feel bringing a new baby into the family. I was crying like, ‘I don’t want you guys to think that I’ll love you any less. You made me a mom. You’ll be just as important to me after this baby is born as you were before.’ And they’ve been incredible. The dynamic between them and Lorelei is awesome. They absolutely adore her, and vice versa.

“I’m not sure everyone would agree, but I feel like I’m rocking a solid 7.5 so far. I don’t think I’m amazing, because I definitely have my faults. I’ve said more than my fair share of ‘I’m sorry, I screwed up, let’s try again.’ I think that’s parenting in general, though. Some days you’re like, ‘I must be the worst parent ever.’ And other days you’re like, ‘Oh, man, I’m killing it.’ But on average I’d say top 30%, doing pretty well.”
“Growing up in the ‘80s, we were not a healthy family. It was all canned and boxed food. My mom was a chronic dieter, raised by a chronic dieter. Fat-free, carb-free — we did all the fad diets.

“My mom passed away from breast cancer when I was 17. At the time, I definitely was not the epitome of health. I tried to get out of gym class as often as possible. If we were running that day, I was the kid who would say, ‘I don’t feel well. I need to go see the nurse.’ I had a lot of self-esteem and self-worth issues. It was just the narrative I had for myself. When you don’t feel like you’re worth the time and effort to lace up your shoes and go for a walk, then you don’t do it because it feels pointless. Getting into fitness and having to face my own issues, that created a whole new life for me.

“They say that anyone who’s lost a lot of weight has that one moment when everything starts to change. For me, it was when I was contacted by MD Anderson as a high-risk case because of my mom’s very aggressive breast cancer. They called after my second born and asked me to come in for all my screenings.

“I was a good 100 pounds overweight, but I blamed genetics. Everybody in my family was overweight, so I figured it was just my lot in life. There was this very sweet radiologist who went over all my results. Then he looked at me and said, ‘Mrs. Carlson, my main concern is your lifestyle.’ He said, ‘With breast cancer in particular, if you’re overweight, you tend to be more at risk. So if you’re not moving, eating a balanced diet, and getting some of this excess weight off, then it’s not a question of if you’ll get cancer, it’s a question of when.’

“I cried, probably for about a week. Then I just decided I did not want to leave the way my mom did, and I started doing something about it.”
“They tell me I was born in 1942. That makes me 78 years old. The night I was born, there was a storm. My dad drove to Liberty County, to Dayton, Texas, to get the midwife. But he didn’t make it back in time. Somehow, my mother delivered me all by herself.

“I was born, and she was critically ill. Later, the doctor told her that if it had not been for the baby licking on her face, she probably wouldn’t have made it. The baby was looking for some milk. That sucking sensation, that’s what kept my mother going, what saved her. I loved my mother dearly, especially after she told me what the doctor said to her. That was amazing to me, to think that I helped save my mother’s life.

“The day she died, I thought I helped save her again. Everybody was saying, ‘Connect her, connect her.’ I said, ‘No, no.’ She didn’t want to be connected to any apparatuses. So we went to the little chapel to pray. While we were praying, the doctor knocked on the door and said, ‘You don’t need to pray much longer. Your mother has passed away. She’s with the Lord now.’ That was a relief to me because I didn’t want to see her connected to a life-support situation. She didn’t want that. I saved her from that.”

“I’ve had a good life, a very good life. Born poor, Born Black. Born the 24th day of April. Born on a Wednesday. All this means a lot to me. As a matter of fact, born right here about 100 feet from where I’m sitting now. There’s a little building there called The House. That’s where I was born. And as if by magic, I’m pastoring a house that belongs to God where I’ve spent 54 years. It’s amazing to me how close I’ve stayed in the same place. And somehow God, I feel, has used me. I’m at the same church I went to as a Sunday school boy.

“Ideas have changed. People have changed. Most of the people who helped to raise me at the church are in the cemetery now. But I’m still here thinking about some of the things they said to me many years ago: ‘If you keep your hand in God’s hands, son, he’ll lead you. If it hurts you, don’t say it because it’s going to hurt somebody else. If you see somebody else hurting, try to do something to ease the pain, not to elevate it.’ That’s what my life has been all about since I was a child.”
The Covestro Baytown site awarded 29 $1,000 STEM and vocational scholarships to Goose Creek CISD, Anahuac ISD and Barbers Hill ISD graduating students to pursue higher education.

The scholarships were awarded based on students’ academic performance, volunteer efforts in the community, leadership experience and demonstrated need for financial aid. Three vocational scholarships were awarded to West Hardin High School, Anahuac High School and Goose Creek Memorial High School seniors; 24 STEM scholarships were awarded to Goose Creek CISD and Barbers Hill ISD seniors.

This year’s selection process looked quite different compared to past years. Under normal circumstances, recipients have the opportunity to come on-site to be presented their award by the site manager, have lunch and their photo taken. Due to COVID-19 restrictions and social distancing measures, students were presented with custom-designed Covestro signs to display in their yard in recognition of their academic excellence. The Baytown Scholarship Committee met with the students and district leaders to award the signs and have their photo taken.

The Covestro Baytown Scholarship Committee serves to help strengthen and grow the site’s annual vocational and STEM scholarship programs. Committee members include MDI-f Production Specialist Jaymie Clary, Environmental Specialist Brandon Buell, Environmental Specialist Alice Sabuni, PMO Technical Assistant Katherine Hoerner, Maintenance Coordinator for CAS Monomers Andy Legg and Communications Specialist Preslie Cox.

Legg said he looks forward to welcoming the scholarship recipients to the workforce in the future.

“It is really great to see the graduating high school students’ enthusiasm about their choice to pursue a career in our industry,” said Legg. “They now have new goals to achieve.”

The funding for vocational scholarships is distributed through Covestro’s endowment fund with Lee College, which awards annual student scholarships to local applicants.

Twenty-four seniors from Goose Creek CISD and Barbers Hill ISD were selected to receive scholarships to pursue degrees in STEM.

Buell, who primarily leads the efforts in the Barbers Hill selection process, says he believes recognizing those students who have demonstrated exemplary behavior both inside and outside the classroom aligns very well with Covestro’s core value of courage.

“The Covestro Scholarship Committee, as always, was very impressed with the achievements of all the BHISD STEM scholarship recipients. They continue to demonstrate excellence with their many academic accolades,” said Buell. “We are confident these students will enjoy much success and have a bright future in all future endeavors.”

This year’s Covestro vocational scholarship recipients were Anahuac High School graduates Logan Borne and Eduardo Muniz, West Hardin High School graduate Russel Payne and Goose Creek Memorial High School graduates Trace Jacobs and Kevin Soriano.

The STEM scholarship recipients were Robert E. Lee High School graduates Zachary Bogle, Emily Galvan, Juan E. Mata, Gabriel Guadalupe Ortega, Effren Vasquez Lozano, Raul Benevides III, Justo Rodriguez and Suzette A. Alaffa; IMPACT EHCS graduates Daniela Gomez and Noe Sanchez; Goose Creek Memorial High School graduates Alyssa Arceneaux, Edgar Barbier and Vanessa Mendoza; and Barbers Hill High School graduates Connor McNally, Carter Strickland, Zen Uriel Wong, Tyler Philo, Jonathan Guentzel, Justin Ramirez, Daigon Fontenot, Zion Blair, Ethaan Engrisseei, Charis Strickland and Mason Daniels.
Baytown Police Chief
Keith Dougherty

Baytown Mayor
Brandon Capetillo

Baytown Fire Chief
Kenneth Dobson

Chevron Phillips Chemical

Pay to the order of City of Baytown First Responders $40,000.00

Forty Thousand

COVID-19 relief Memo

Chevron Phillips Chemical Co.

Authorized Signature

DATE Sept. 10, 2020
Chevron Phillips Chemical

Pay to the order of Hearts and Hands of Baytown $5,000.00

Five Thousand 00/100 DOLLARS

COVID-19 relief Memo

Chevron Phillips Chemical Co.

Authorized Signature

Hearts and Hands of Baytown
Executive Director Nikki Rincon
ExxonMobil Baytown Area enjoys a longstanding partnership with Lee College for more than 85 years. ExxonMobil’s contributions help to support and grow Lee College’s technical program and pave the way for students to enjoy great careers in the petrochemical industry. “For ExxonMobil, supporting education in the communities in which we operate is vital to everyone’s success,” stated ExxonMobil Chemical Plant Site Manager Kate Lightfoot.

“It is our pleasure to donate $75,000 to Lee College’s Advanced Technology Programs. Our partnership with Lee College is integral to ensuring high paying careers for students in our community as well as a skilled workforce to make the petrochemical products that supply energy and are vital to our everyday lives.”
EXXONMOBIL’S BAYTOWN AREA SITES DONATE SUPPLIES TO COMMUNITIES AFFECTED BY HURRICANE LAURA

The Baytown area is no stranger to hazardous weather. When weather reports began to circulate announcing the development and possible landfall of Hurricane Laura, the community put its safety plans into action to ensure it was prepared for the worst. Out of an abundance of caution, ExxonMobil Baytown Area took the necessary precautions to ensure employees, contractors and their families would be prepared as well.

While Hurricane Laura spared our community, our neighbors in Louisiana and parts of southeast Texas were not as fortunate. Hurricane Laura left thousands without power and some areas without water for weeks.

To help those areas most affected by the storm, ExxonMobil’s Baytown Area employees began to reach out to local businesses, friends and community members to organize and collect much-needed supplies and trailers to help transport the donations to Louisiana. Refinery employee Angie Baker led the effort and quickly collected equipment donations for members of the Cajun Navy. Supplies included bottled water, canned goods, clothing, toys, diapers, toilet paper, cleaning supplies and additional essential items.

“I would say that overall this came together because we were all affected by Hurricane Harvey in 2017 and the thought of another tragic event like that heading our way made us all prepare above and beyond. We took the safety skills we have learned at ExxonMobil home with us because the safety of our families is important and so is the safety of the community,” said Baker.

In only a few days, the effort became a success. The donations were taken to a small church that was damaged during the storm but continued to support the community. Donations were also given to the Cajun Navy staged on the east side of Lake Charles; Friends Helping Friends, a United Way partner agency in Orange, Texas; and a community center located in Hackberry, Louisiana, that was set up as a shelter for those displaced by the storm.

“What an overwhelming feeling to see that even during times like these, our community is so willing to give. Thank you so much everyone that was able to contribute. I will never stop being amazed at the size of people’s hearts in Texas. We are no stranger to the devastating outcome of hurricanes. It is so important to help our neighbors. We never know when we will be the one that needs help”, said Baker.

ExxonMobil remains committed to supporting its neighbors and surrounding communities, especially during times of need. While the Baytown area was spared, local businesses and members of the community came together to help those who were affected by the storm.

Together we are stronger. Together we are Baytown proud.
ExxonMobil Baytown Area is committed to being part of the solution to help combat COVID-19 and has focused its efforts on providing the necessary resources and supplies to those on the front lines in our surrounding communities. To date, ExxonMobil Baytown Area has donated more than 2,000 gallons of hand sanitizer, 20,000 surgical face masks, 30,000 gallons of fuel, $25,000 in fuel gift cards and $53,000 in funds to local schools, daycare centers, churches, businesses and hospitals. ExxonMobil’s partnerships in the communities in which we operate are something to be valued and keeping community members healthy and safe continue to be a priority during the pandemic.

Together, we are stronger. Together, we are Baytown Proud.