The COVID-19 global pandemic impact on the way people live and work is significant and is especially challenging to the Southern way of life. Hugging, warm hand-shakes, large family gatherings, and festivals every weekend, for example, have been canceled or postponed.

Norco has embraced the changes professionally and personally while continuing to demonstrate care for one another by social distancing, wearing appropriate protective gear and as the site always does, supporting the community in a variety of ways,” says Interim General Manager Jack Holden. “Recently, we made a donation of personal protection equipment to the St. Charles Parish Volunteer Fire Department, treated more than 300 St. Charles Hospital healthcare workers to lunch and facilitated the delivery of 10,000 protective masks to area hospitals. In the weeks ahead, Norco will continue to care for our neighbors, our employees and our community.”
Dedicated, hard-working, caring, inspiring ... it’s easy to find a string of powerful adjectives to describe healthcare workers on the frontline of fighting the COVID-19 pandemic. Add tired and hungry to the list, too, as the healthcare community continues to push forward with unequaled energy. Shell Norco encouraged the healthcare team at St. Charles Parish Hospital, managed by Ochsner Health System, to take a break and enjoy a white beans and fried catfish lunch or dinner on April 14th as a special “thank you.” The food, catered by The Seafood Pot, was particularly meaningful as it helped support a local restaurant during a challenging business climate.

“On behalf of the hospital, I would like to sincerely thank Shell for its support and generosity. All of our employees, from environmental services and security, to physicians and nurses, are on the front lines caring for patients with great compassion,” says St. Charles Hospital CEO Terrell Neal. “Having a hot meal waiting for them during a break is a welcomed sight. We are very grateful that so many local businesses and organizations have donated meals during this time.”

“We are very honored to help recognize healthcare workers,” adds The Seafood Pot Manager Jan Dejean. “We know many of them personally as regular customers and know they are working hard to keep our community healthy and strong. Our business has been pretty steady with drive-thru service, but we definitely appreciate Shell’s business as we are staying steady one day at a time.”

Norco will treat St. Charles Hospital team members to lunch and dinner again at the end of April.
PROTECTING Volunteer FIRE FIGHTERS

ST. CHARLES PARISH FIRE DEPARTMENT’S MEDICAL RESPONDERS are better protected these days with a gift from Norco. Thanks to the efforts of Health and Safety, Contracting & Procurement and the Warehouse team, 1125 PPE suits were donated to the nine St. Charles Parish Volunteer Fire Departments.

According to St. Charles Parish Firefighter Association President Armond Bourque, the PPE equipment will help protect volunteers from COVID-19 exposure with the proper protection recommended by the CDC. “We greatly appreciate the donation from Shell to help and protect fire services during this time,” he says. “Protective gear is limited with priority going to hot spots, such as Orleans Parish. We are the back up for St. Charles Hospital and it is especially important that we protect our responders. Thank you, Shell.”

WILMA MATHERNE is a master seamstress. If you’ve ever seen her work, you know she is talented and creative. Taking on the task of making masks to minimize the spread of COVID-19 was not going to be a challenge for the St. Charles Parish resident. Using a variety of materials a seamstress always has at hand along with appropriate lining, the mother of Norco Project Engineer Nate Matherne, is working diligently to make up to 10 facial masks a day. Nate is taking part in the project as well. He is distributing the useful and colorful masks to local families who express the need for protection.

Inspired by Wilma’s creative energy, Norco’s Emergency Operations Center partnered with her to sew customized Shell facial coverings using repurposed flame-retardant uniform material as another tool to protect employees on the job. This effort reinforced CDC recommendations to use masks if you are unable to maintain 6 feet of social distancing and complied with the site’s Personal Protection Equipment requirements in various locations throughout the site.

Making Masks With Care and Concern

Stay at home and wear a facial covering if you have to go out. That’s the latest protocol to minimize the spread of COVID-19. A quick Internet search on how to sew a facial covering will also provide step-by-step instructions and video tutorials. If someone gives you a home made mask, you’ll know it was a labor of love!

“We greatly appreciate the donation from Shell to help and protect fire services during this time. Protective gear is limited with priority going to hot spots, such as Orleans Parish. We are the back up for St. Charles Hospital and it is especially important that we protect our responders. Thank you, Shell.”

ARMOND BOURQUE | St. Charles Parish Firefighter Association President
“This is a donation that supports the entire community on many levels. We are facilitating a way to keep healthcare workers protected as they care for COVID-19 patients while presenting students with an educational experience that also enriches their community commitment.”

JACK HOLDEN
Norco Interim General Manager

Four Destrehan High School Wildcat Robotics Team members, a DHS alumnus, St. Charles Satellite Center Interactive Media Facilitator BRIAN GOUGH and DHS Robotics Team Coach BRIAN YOUNG are utilizing 3D printing technology to bring imagination to life and helping to defend front-line healthcare workers fighting the Coronavirus pandemic. The students are crafting high-demand face shields with printers they’ve checked out from the Satellite Center for at-home-socially-distanced manufacturing.

Shell donated $7,500 to purchase the necessary supplies to produce an estimated 7,000 full-face shields and up to 3,000 medical mask ear-savers. Completed shields have been delivered to St. Charles Parish EMS, Access Health and Tulane Medical Center, and Ochsner Kenner. Acadian Ambulance, Baton Rouge General Hospital, and New Orleans EMS are also on the delivery schedule. Requests have come from information the students posted on Facebook, word of mouth, and affiliation with 3D Printed PPE Greater Baton Rouge and GNO Inc.

“This is a donation that supports the entire community on many levels,” says Interim General Manager Jack Holden. “We are facilitating a way to keep healthcare workers protected as they care for COVID-19 patients while presenting students with an educational experience that also enriches their community commitment.”

“Shell is providing a great opportunity for our kids who have demonstrated initiative and are working many hours a day to produce the visors,” says St. Charles Parish Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Ken Oertling. “The support Norco demonstrates for our schools is much appreciated.”

According to Gough, the project is turning out 10 shields an hour at maximum production rates. “Shell’s donation is helping us secure the supplies that are not always easy to secure,” he says.
Thanks to Shell for allowing St. Charles Parish students the ability to make an important impact on their community in these uncertain times,” Gough adds. “I cannot begin to imagine the emotional capital that this project will add to each of the students involved by allowing them to do something instead of just watching it happen; this has to be healing. As a parent of one of the kids involved, I am humbled to play a small part in helping these highly talented kids show their leadership in a time of need for our community. These kids are amazing.”

The project is making an impact on the students who quickly responded to community need.

“When the 2020 season for our Robotics Team came to a quick and unexpected halt half-way through, my teammates and I were disappointed, to say the least,” says DHS Senior Clayton James. “I understand that the world is going through something right now that makes the robotics season look of minimal importance, but it is something that we poured our hearts and souls into for the past few months. To watch it go from a high-intensity activity to almost non-existent within a few hours was a reality check if anything else. Looking back at what we accomplished with 3D printing over the past few days, however, I am starting to see the lines which connect our robotics competition to the world around us. Using mechanical and soft skills that we picked up on the team, we can make a true difference in the wake of the destructive forces that COVID-19 brought to our communities. The 2020 robotics season did not come to a halt, it just shifted from the game we were prepared for to responding to the troubles which we face today. It is up to us to stand up and do what we can to help.”

“We started this project because we were tired of sitting at home and watching this pandemic sweep the world while we did nothing,” says DHS Senior Bryce Gough. “So we decided to do what we know how to do - build. We began to help the people of our health system by creating face shields that would protect them from the droplets coughed out by patients. To create these face shields we used the 3D printers we already had and borrowed printers from the Satellite Center and Wildcat Robotics. With help from Shell, we have been able to buy the needed filament and transparencies for the shields. It has been a massively rewarding experience to help the healthcare workers of our community. A few of the members of our high school robotics team that own 3D printers wanted to help out during this pandemic,” says DHS Junior Savannah McReynolds. “We got together and discussed how we could produce PPE for hospitals that are in need. We got the school’s permission to borrow some of the 3D printers that we use in our shop. At my house, I have my personal 3D printer and the school’s 3D printer. The 3D printers have taken over a room in my house and I run them as much as possible. The healthcare workers during this time are putting themselves at risk to help others, and we saw an opportunity to help them stay as safe as possible. I’m very grateful for Shell’s donation to help us buy supplies to print out as much PPE as we can, and I’m glad to be able to help out in this small way during this pandemic.”

“The choice to help was simple,” explains UNO student Daniel Floyd, a DHS graduate who serves as Robotics Team mentor. “We understood there was a need we could supply, and the decision was obvious. If we had the ability to help, then we had to.”

“The entire manufacturing system has become so streamlined,” explains DHS Senior Aidan Oddlokken. “One day we were talking about how we could get started and only a few days later we were making plans to print 5,000 face shields. I realized how bad of a situation we are in when my mom told me that the mobile testing stations won’t have PPE for the staff. I’m glad I’m spending my time helping others rather than laying around. People keep on telling me that they feel bad that my graduation ceremony and senior year are on the line, but the way I see it I’d rather be doing this. Everyone who graduates high school gets to wear a cap and gown, how many get to print equipment that can save lives?”

“Shell is providing a great opportunity for our kids who have demonstrated initiative and are working many hours a day to produce the visors. The support Norco demonstrates for our schools is much appreciated.”

DR. KEN OERTLING
Superintendent, St. Charles Parish Public Schools
Around the world, strict measures introduced by governments are helping limit the spread of COVID-19—and changing the way we live. At Shell, employees are responding. From producing key ingredients that go into soaps, sanitizers and other vital products to providing the fuels needed to transport patients, deliver supplies and allow critical infrastructure workers to report to work, Shell is playing an important role in the global COVID-19 battle.

In Louisiana, Governor John Bel Edwards’ stay-at-home order to flatten the virus’ curve made an exception for essential businesses including manufacturing sites that provide essential products and services. There is no question that Shell is fueling the state, the country, and the world, with essential products.

At Norco, dedicated employees are keeping the plant running to produce fuels needed for shipment of critical supplies and transporting personnel across the country. In addition, ethylene produced at Norco is piped directly to Shell Geismar. The Geismar plant uses this vital ingredient to manufacture base ingredients for detergents, cleaners and sanitizers to fight COVID-19 on the global front.

“Ethylene is the base ingredient needed to produce detergents, cleaners and sanitizers to fight COVID-19.”

“The Coronavirus has affected me personally,” says Norco Production Supervisor Cyril Francoise. “I have loved ones and former classmates who lost the virus battle. I have some who have overcome the disease and some who are continuing to fight it. The hardest thing for all of us is not being able to physically console families at this time. But I understand the importance of social distancing and in spite of everything, I chose to remain positive in understanding the role we have not only at Norco but also in assisting the folks in Geismar to battle this virus. The ingredients they make go into the products we are using every day to decrease the spread of disease.”

Geismar E&S Manager Tim Brignac appreciates the close working relationship between Norco and his work site. “I’d like to give a huge shout out to Team Norco for partnering with us on our ethylene stream. Thank you for a business first mindset during this difficult time.”

Kirby Overstreet, a Geismar Production Supervisor, agrees. “Thank you, Norco, for all your hard work to keep your site up and running and for continuing to send us the ethylene that enables us to produce the chemicals that are essential to everyone in the world today.”
St. Charles Parish residents know who to call in times of emergency. From assistance and support following hurricanes, floods or individual crisis, The United Way of St. Charles is a comforting resource. As COVID-19 concerns accelerated throughout the region, UWSC and its partner agencies have experienced a significant increase in calls for financial and food assistance as well as healthcare information. In response to community need, Shell is funding $126,000 to the United Way of St. Charles Parish to support the organization’s COVID-19 Community Relief Fund. Shell Norco is donating $60,000 for diverse relief programs including financial assistance to the unemployed. Shell Oil Company is contributing $66,000 targeted to food distribution programs.

“Neighbors helping neighbors is the way Shell works,” says Interim General Manager Jack Holden. “It is so important to us to provide support especially in the community where we live and work. These are challenging times for all of us and it is important to work together to keep our community strong and healthy.” Shell has also supported the Capital Area United Way with a $50,000 donation addressing needs in the Shell Convent and Geismar communities.

“Without hesitation, Shell Norco has stepped up in a big way to assist with the increasing needs,” says United Way of St. Charles Executive Director John Dias. “The generosity Shell continues to show our community is a true reflection of their unwavering commitment to being a great neighbor. The funds received from Shell Norco will allow United Way to provide additional community services and respond quickly as new needs arise during this unprecedented time,” Dias concluded. “We are anticipating a tripled call volume for financial assistance during the next three months as so many people are out of work.”

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“We are also receiving calls from the community asking how they can help those in need,” adds Dias. “Helping each other in times of need is just the way we do things in St. Charles Parish. While most of the community follows a stay-at-home mandate, there are few opportunities for hands-on assistance. Donations, however, will help us fuel our assistance programs now and in the coming months. We are anticipating a tripled call volume for financial assistance during the next three months as so many people are out of work.”

Dias notes that the United Way is estimating a need for an extra $60,000 in its emergency financial needs assistance fund to cover the next three months and an additional $66,000 to provide meal distribution. The organization is currently working with the St. Charles Parish Public School system and Second Harvest Food Bank to distribute the existing food supply and will be replenishing the pantries as needed.

If you would like to assist UWSC with a personal financial donation, go to uwaysc.org/give. If you are in good health and available to help with drive-thru food assistance pick-ups, contact Mary Anne Schindler at Beronco@hotmail.com with the Matthew 25:35 Ministries.

Just Heat it Up and Enjoy – a Family “Thank You” Dinner

Norco’s Fresh Market is keeping its doors open during the current global pandemic. You might not recognize the store’s employees, however. They are wearing masks, gloves and cashiers are working behind plastic shields. But they are ready to help – even for special occasions. Norco recently called on the store to help treat employees and their families to a take-out family meal in appreciation for their energy and dedication to keep the site up and running during the COVID-19 fight. Employees received a chicken fettuccine, green beans and garlic bread family-sized meal to take home, heat up and enjoy.

“We are happy to have the opportunity to prepare meals for our neighbors at Shell during this challenging time,” says Fresh Market Owner Brandon Rivers. “Our store has been blessed with no illness. We are taking every precaution possible to be able to serve the community and make sure everyone has the food that they need. In addition to protecting our employees, we are frequently deep cleaning our store. And when we stock shelves, we make sure that everyone is standing at least six feet apart. I am proud to be a part of Shell’s recognition for its employees and always enjoy seeing Shell Norco people in our store.”

“Donations will help us fuel our assistance programs now and in the coming months. We are anticipating a tripled call volume for financial assistance during the next three months as so many people are out of work.”

JOHN DIAS | UWSC Executive Director
Shell secured 10,000 high-demand face masks for donation to healthcare workers throughout south Louisiana. Working in cooperation with the Governor’s Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (GOHSEP), the KN-95 masks were distributed by the Louisiana National Guard according to a priority needs assessment.

During a recent press conference, Louisiana Governor John Bel Edwards thanked Shell for its donation of the masks designed to filter 95% of particles including the Coronavirus. “We appreciate all of them and we know that these items of PPE will go a long way to helping our frontline healthcare workers,” he said.

“We would like to thank our partners in the private sector for this effort,” says GOHSEP Director Jim Waskom. “The masks supplied by Shell to Louisiana will directly support the men and women fighting to keep us safe and fighting the spread of COVID-19. Shell is an important part of our River Parishes region. This generous donation shows the company’s commitment to our families and the state.”

Norco Maintenance Excellence Manager, Jaylynn Jackson (above), joins Security Officer Tina Roussel (right) in handing over KN-95 face masks to Louisiana National Guard representatives. The Guard will distribute the masks according to areas identified with most critical needs.