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April 29, 2007

The course is runner-designed – a fast, flat and scenic course that will take runners and walkers along the hallowed roads and trails used by many running legends. The music-filled family event will include a marathon, half-marathon, 5K and kids' runs. Don't miss your chance to participate in this inaugural event and run in the footsteps of LEGENDS.

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Hynix's Acid

Eugene factory increasing use while others cut back

While the Hynix chip plant in Eugene wants to dramatically increase its use of hydrogen fluoride (HF), industrial facilities in California are trying to cut back on their use of the dangerous acid.

A recent article in the *L.A. Times* documents Bakersfield, Calif. anxiety over an oil refinery's proposal to use HF in its processes.

Hynix uses 103 tons of hydrofluoric acid a year in its West Eugene plant to etch silicon wafers, according to the Eugene Toxics Right-to-Know database. HF is a byproduct of hydrofluoric acid. Hynix recently applied for a permit to increase its release of HF into the air from 1.8 to 5 tons a year.

Contact with HF, even in concentrations less than 50 percent, can cause burns that penetrate the skin into the tissue underneath. Direct exposure to HF can be fatal. Chronic exposure to HF can damage the kidneys and the liver.

Like Hynix, Big West Oil in

two tons of HF into the air. The gas drifted towards nearby businesses and made several people ill.

Since the terrorist attacks of 9/11, at least 225 industrial plants have switched to less dangerous chemicals, according to the "Preventing Toxic Terrorism" report put out by the Center for American Progress.

Incidents have occurred at other plants using HF. In October 2001, an accidental release of HF into the air in Paulsboro, N.J., drifted towards a nearby elementary school, forcing students and staff to secure themselves in the gym, sealing doors and windows with plastic and duct tape.

In March 2006, a truck carrying HF overturned in Rankin, Miss., leading to a warning from the state Department of Health: "Breathing in hydrogen fluoride at high levels or in combination with skin contact can cause death from an irregular heartbeat or from fluid buildup in the lungs."

HF is transported to Hynix in Eugene by truck via major thor-



Workers in the Hynix plant do not interact directly with HF. Spokesman Bobby Lee said, "No reasonable person would want to handle HF directly."

California is going through a permitting process for its use of HF. Big West proposed to use HF, instead of a safer chemical to produce an octane booster that is used in cleaner-burning fuels. Big West is a subsidiary of Flying J Inc., which owns over 200 retail diesel fuel locations, including two travel plazas in Oregon, with two more planned.

After an outcry against the potential dangers of HF, Big West altered its plan and agreed to use a form of the chemical modified with an additive experts say makes it safer. This modified HF has a reduced ability to form a traveling cloud if released into the air.

Though pleased by Big West's offer to use the modified HF, the Environmental Health Services Department in the Bakersfield area would still like to investigate other alternatives to HF to ensure the community's safety, according to the *Bakersfield Californian* newspaper.

Most refineries in California stopped using concentrated hydrofluoric acid following two accidental releases of HF in the late 1980s in California and Texas that created concern over the public health dangers of HF.

In October 2006, the Big West refinery in Bakersfield accidentally released almost

oughfares. The containers of HF are "collision protected," according to Bobby Lee, spokesperson for Hynix in Eugene. Before driving in and around Eugene, "the drivers and dispatchers verify the safest and most secure route prior to delivery of hazardous materials," he said.

Lee said, "In the last 10 years Hynix has been operating, there have been zero incidents." Workers in the Hynix plant do not interact directly with HF. Lee said, "No reasonable person would want to handle HF directly."

Though Hynix's proposed increased release of HF is, according to the Lane Regional Air Protection Agency (LRAPA) draft permit, well below the amount said to cause "significant risk" to humans with chronic exposure, area residents are concerned about the affects of the chemical on humans as well as endangered species nearby.

Neighbors of Hynix attended a recent status meeting on the proposed permit with Hynix and LRAPA. Many are still concerned about the use of HF. Churchill area neighbor Rich Branchik said, "Five tons into the air is five tons in the air!"

The comment period on the permit closed March 31, and a decision on the permit will be made by May 15. **EW**