



CORPUS CHRISTI NEWS

July 11, 2022



CITGO Hosts Demonstration of Latest in Firewater Pump Technology for Local First Responders

During a natural disaster or other emergency, it is vital for firefighters to have reliable water capabilities. CITGO Corpus Christi Refinery recently hosted a demonstration of a pumping system with recent technology that would increase those capabilities. The Otter Pumping System is a floating fire pump that can draft high volumes of water from a water source such as a firewater pond or the shipping channel.

CCR Fire Chief Dennis Beyer says he learned about the system at the Hazardous Material Conference in Baltimore in May. He says that CITGO nor any company or agency in the Coastal Bend region has the Otter because it is relatively new technology. CITGO invited representatives from several local entities to see the Otter firsthand. Invitees included Port of Corpus Christi, Corpus Christi Fire Department, Valero, Flint Hills Resources and pump system vendor Specialized Professional Services, Inc.



CITGO CCR Fire Chief Dennis Beyer oversees the demo of The Otter Pumping System. (CCR G&PA)



Representatives from CITGO, Port of Corpus Christi, Corpus Christi Fire Department, and others learn more information about The Otter from vendor SPSSI. (CCR G&PA)

According to the manufacturer, the floating fire pump has versatility to access open water sources that a typical fire pumper or draft pump cannot reach. Another feature of the Otter is a lightweight design (98 pounds) that is physically manageable by one or two first responders. Beyer says that traditional drafting operations are labor intensive, time consuming and limited because of a lack of access to areas that are helpful for this type of work. This pump system, he says, gives his crews more options and more access on where they can draft water. The equipment currently being used is not very portable and requires our firefighters to be close to the water source and use a heavy hose. The Otter can be up to a hundred feet away from the water source – something Beyer calls “a game changer.”

Continued on page 2



CITGO Hosts Demonstration of Latest in Firewater Pump Technology for Local First Responders (cont.)

Beyer also explains how a system like The Otter could have enhanced the response to a real-world situation. During Winter Storm Uri in February 2021, Beyer says that city water was out of service, forcing CITGO to draft water out of the ship channel to maintain and replenish our firewater tank levels. He recalls that it took firefighters over 15 hours to get the drafting operation set up and flowing water using the current equipment. Following a quick set-up of less than a half-hour, The Otter was able to flow water higher than the 3,000 gallons per minute (gpm) for which the pump is rated simply with the push of a button.



A representative from SPSI controls the power unit of The Otter Pumping System. (CCR G&PA)



During the demo, The Otter was able to flow water at a rate of 4,225 gallons per minute (gpm). That was more than the 3,000-gpm rate of the pump. (CCR G&PA)

Speaking about the demonstration, Beyer says, “Before the demo, all of the firefighters, including me, were very skeptical about the claims the vendor was making but we were all very impressed and the pump exceeded our expectation.”

The successful demo has sparked local interest in purchasing The Otter. Beyer says he would like to acquire the system for CITGO and adds that Flint Hills and Valero are also looking into possibly buying the pump system.

Click [here](#) for more sights and sounds from the June 30 demo.