

CITIZEN'S ADVISORY COUNCIL TO LA PORTE INDUSTRY

CAC Learns That Major Weather Study Is Based in La Porte

Wondering why they are building pads and installing utilities at the La Porte Airport? The Citizen's Advisory Council (CAC) to La Porte Industry learned that a major national research effort to improve weather forecasting is taking place in the Houston area with La Porte Airport its main base of operations. The study is called TRACER (Tracking Aerosol Convection Interactions Experiment). Starting this summer, residents may see research equipment being installed. James Flynn, Research Associate Professor at the University of Houston (UH), told the CAC that official measurements will begin October 1 and continue for a full year.

In addition to UH, entities conducting research will include the US Department of Energy's (DOE's) Los Alamos National Laboratory, NASA, NOAA, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, Texas A&M, Baylor, and the National Science Foundation. Others want to be part of the effort because La Porte has been the site of previous air studies and is known as a hospitable home base, with good support from the city and industry.

Besides the fixed equipment, researchers will use boats and aircrafts to take measurements. Residents may see the UH mobile lab driving around town. (Stay clear!) The Houston area was selected for study because it has a lot of convective clouds, thunderstorms, existing data as well as a large population and emissions from vehicles. The La Porte site is also close to industry, a port, a bay, and a gulf, allowing study of the interaction between pollutants and sea breeze. Data from here will be compared with the study's "cleaner" location, in the country near Needville TX. Radar in Pearland TX will track both sites. Study data will be available to scientists and the public at DOE's Atmospheric Radiation Measurement (ARM) [website for TRACER](#). CAC members plan to track the progress of this effort involving weather and air quality research.

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