

# the arabian sun

April 15, 2020 | Vol. LXXV, No. 16

a weekly Saudi Aramco publication for employees

## COVID-19:

### the Kingdom's health is in your hands

For the latest news and updates on the company's activities and response to the Coronavirus, scan the QR.



# resilient and prepared in the field

employees key to maintaining business continuity

see page 5

*Joseph Galang, a rig medic, measures the temperature of Rakan F. Alotaibi, a drilling engineer in the Exploration and Oil Drilling Engineering Department. Twice a day, the rig medic takes and records the temperature of employees and contractors on the site, as well as asking if they are showing any symptoms. (Photo: Hatim B. Oweida/MPD).*

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Get the latest news from JHAH



## Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Get the latest travel recommendations, find out who's at risk, view the types of coronaviruses, and get insights from Johns Hopkins Aramco Healthcare experts.

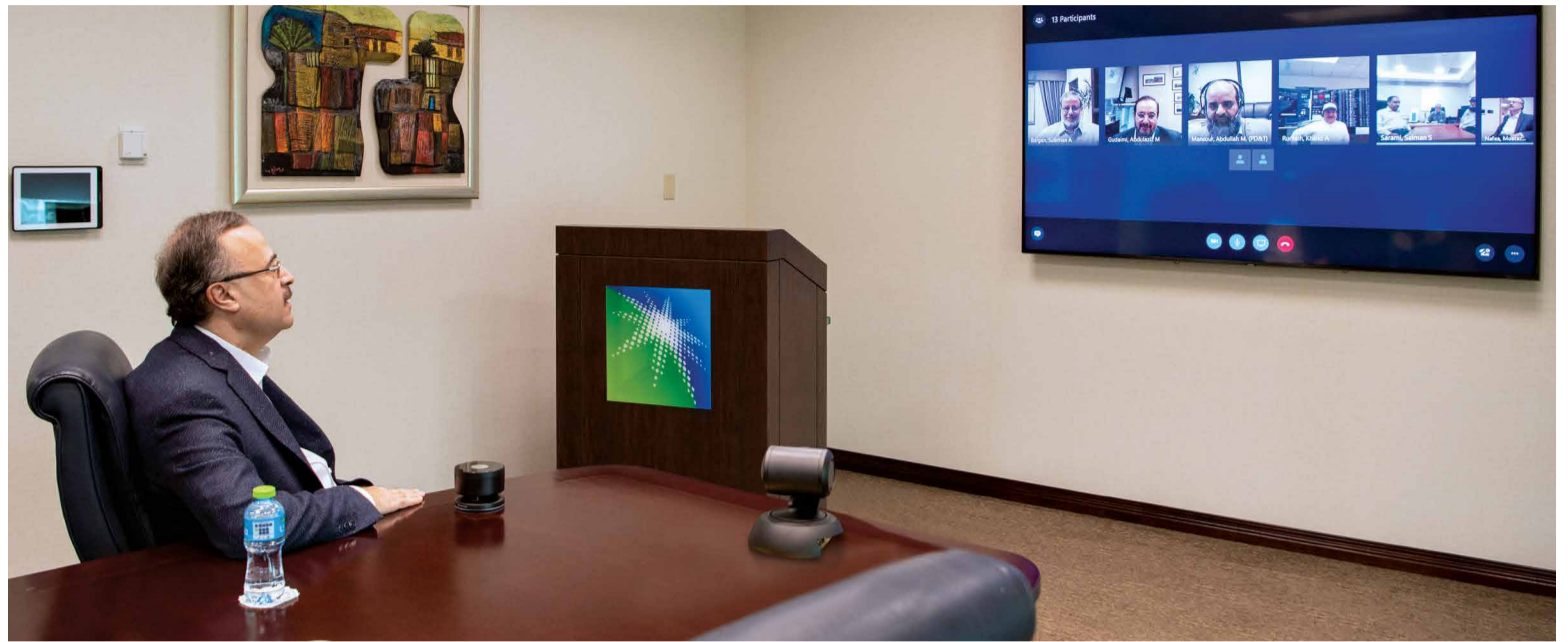


# CEO: our health is essential for business continuity success

In a videoconference call with Saudi Aramco's Riyadh Refinery and Distribution employees last week, Saudi Aramco president and CEO Amin Nasser reiterated that the health and well-being of every employee is essential for the company's business continuity plans to succeed.

"Wherever we are working from to support the company during this critical time, be it at refineries and plants, bulk plants, or at home, your health and well-being is essential for our business continuity," Nasser said.

He was joined on the call by Abdulaziz M. Al-Gudaimi, senior vice president of Downstream; Suleman A. Al-Bargan, vice president of Domestic Refining and NGL Fractionation; Abdullah M. Al Mansour, vice president of Pipelines, Distribution and Terminals; and Abdulrahman A. Al Fadhel, manager of the Riyadh Refinery Department, as well as colleagues from the operational areas.



In speaking on a conference call with Riyadh Refinery last week, Amin Nasser emphasized that employee health and business continuity go hand in hand. "Wherever we are working from to support the company during this critical time, be it at refineries and plants, bulk plants, or at home, your health and well-being is essential for our business continuity," Nasser said on the call.

## ready for the unexpected

Nasser went on to express his appreciation for the readiness of the Riyadh Refinery teams, as they are currently con-

ducting turnaround and inspection (T&I) activities at various refining facilities.

He cited lessons learned from last Sep-

tember's attacks on Abqaiq and Khurais, which highlighted the need to "expect the unexpected," and be ready to step up and respond quickly during times of adversity.

Adding that the COVID-19 pandemic is another test of Saudi Aramco's capabilities and resilience, he noted that employees are working hard, making many sacrifices and observing health and safety precautions.

Nasser highlighted how the company had to increase production to the maximum sustainable capacity of 12 million barrels of crude oil a day within less than three weeks; adding that this milestone moment in Saudi Aramco history demonstrated the readiness of employees and how every organization worked closely together to achieve this target.

## coming together to fight COVID-19

The company has undertaken stringent measures to tackle COVID-19, with the

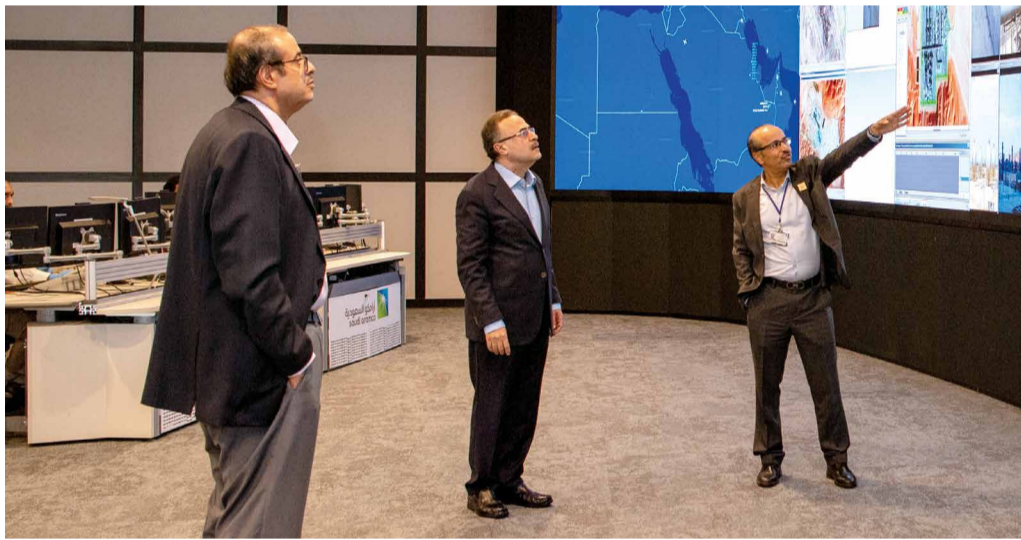
establishment of an executive task force headed by Nabeel A. Al Jama', acting service line head of Operations and Business Services, while Johns Hopkins Aramco Healthcare's (JHAH) response and readiness level was also elevated as the pandemic spread globally.

"JHAH is a significant contributor to our business continuity plans," Nasser said.

The Riyadh Refinery, along with other Saudi Aramco refineries in-Kingdom, is playing an important role to support critical services, infrastructure, and the health care sector in the country's efforts to fight the disease.

"We are continuing the momentum and service to support the Kingdom," Al Fadhel said.

Fahad H. Al Salhi, Central Region Distribution Department manager, said during the videoconference that the Riyadh Bulk Plant has implemented safe distancing and stringent guidelines for 4,000 drivers who come through the plants in trucks.



Amin Nasser is given a tour of the 911 Emergency Center by Aali M. Al Zahrani, vice president of Safety and Industrial Security, and Nabeel A. Al Jama', acting service line head of Operations and Business Services and head of the COVID-19 Response Team. The CEO also visited the Community Services Command Center in the Al-Mujamma'.

# connection, communication, and commitment key to leading in difficult times

The challenge presented by the COVID-19 pandemic has caused a great amount of uncertainty worldwide. As a global energy leader, Saudi Aramco isn't immune to these challenges.

However, what has set us apart for more than 80 years is our ability to weather changes and respond proactively to market conditions, as well as our highly resilient people.

COVID-19, however, represents a new type of challenge for leadership, because it is a "Human Challenge," not just a financial one. With remote work and a distributed workforce the 'new normal', leaders today are under even greater pressure to perform and succeed in an uncertain business environment.

To meet this challenge, HR has recently launched a new 90-minute webinar on "Leading in Difficult Times," designed in-house to help company leaders at all

levels gain new perspectives and skills for these unprecedented times.

"Crisis always presents challenges, but successful people also understand that they can present unprecedented opportunities for growth. We took the latest research and best practices from our partners at Harvard, Wharton, MIT, and other leading institutions, and modified it to fit our unique culture," said HR vice president Nabil K. Al-Dabal.

## connection, communication, commitment

Three key behaviors are essential for leaders to thrive — not just survive — during difficult times: connection, communication, and commitment.

Connection reflects authenticity, empathy, and accessibility during difficult times. Supervisors can model this locally by making a personal connection

with each person on their team. Division heads and managers should be connecting with their direct reports more often as planning and strategy cycles shorten. And leaders can connect in many ways — phone calls instead of email, or scheduling a Skype call. Small changes can have a big impact on everyone's ability to stay connected.

Communication is how leaders build connectivity, keeping the team engaged with a focus on clear and consistent communication. The best practice is to establish a new paradigm for communicating your sphere of influence, maybe touching base more often. Importantly, you should be emotionally intelligent when responding to the different needs of your people. By matching your style to the needs of the individual, team, and circumstances, you will see greater response and engagement.

Lastly, Commitment is the ability to stay focused on core operations while still being flexible to meet and exceed targets. This requires leaders to stay grounded in what needs to be done while maintaining a growth mindset to get ahead of any potential future changes. It also relates to the commitment of the leader to their people, reminding them of shared goals and modeling positive behaviors.

It is the goal of HR to prepare and support our people and our leadership to meet and overcome these challenges.

As noted by Joel J. Hayes, acting director of Management and Professional Development, "We realize just how much the world is changing. But if the only thing that is certain in business is uncertainty, then this should be a time for incredible growth and learning. But only if we make the most of it."



# a time for giving

Aramco supports Health Endowment Fund for Ministry of Health, employees help orphans and widows with record SR5.5 million in donations to date



*Ithra volunteers prepare the packages to be sent out to orphans and widows as part of Saudi Aramco's Employee Donation Campaign.*

Aramco and its subsidiaries announced on April 1 its support for the Health Endowment Fund for the Ministry of Health, with a total amount of SR200 million, in line with the efforts made by the government of The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques to combat the outbreak of COVID-19, and supporting the initiatives of the Ministry of Health to confront this global pandemic out of national responsibility.

This initiative also comes as an extension of Saudi Aramco's national role, showcasing the company's value of corporate citizenship. Requested by the Ministry of Energy, the company's endowment fund strives to support the initiative of **inten-**

**sive care room ventilators, highly efficient air purifiers for quarantines, and protective tools for health care practitioners and patients.**

### employees step up and display citizenship

In addition to the company's support to the Health Endowment Fund for the Ministry of Health, Saudi Aramco has also launched a donation campaign among employees that looks to support the less privileged — orphans and widows — across the Kingdom.

The donation contains food staples, hygiene products for widows, fun, care boxes dedicated for orphaned children that

include story books, coloring books, and different games for them to have fun, as well as food and hygienic products, delivered right to their doorsteps.

The fund has set a record by collecting SR2.6 million on the first day, rising to SR3.2 million the second day, reaching to a total of SR4.5 million as of April 6. Within five days, the donations surpassed the company's Ramadan donations in 2019.

As of Tuesday, employees had donated SR5.5 million to the campaign. This showcases the generosity and support of Saudi Aramco employees and their mutual humanitarian outlook on helping the community.

The company has also committed to pay

a sum to match the employees' total offering through the campaign, doubling the impact of the donation as a form of encouragement.

Considering its position as a pillar for national and global economies, Saudi Aramco has taken a number of measures to ensure the continuity of its business, while maintaining the safety of its employees and their work environments.

These procedures include directing many employees to work remotely from their homes, intensifying sterilization efforts in offices and facilities, and adhering to standard health practices at work sites, as well as following the instructions of the authorities.

# Aramco supporting communities at home and abroad

by Kyle Pakka

In the worldwide fight to slow the spread of COVID-19, Saudi Aramco is doing its part to ensure the world has access to the energy it needs while also protecting the health and safety of its people wherever they work and live.

Saudi Aramco is also reaching out to help support its neighbors and people in the larger community, mobilizing resources and providing support to important causes and charitable organizations in the Kingdom and in international locations where the company does business.

### Saudi Aramco at home

Saudi Aramco is committed to supporting safe, healthy, and thriving communities in the Kingdom. As a company, Saudi Aramco has made significant contributions to support health care systems and personnel, and our employees have generously donated money to support important causes.

Saudi Aramco has donated SR200 million to the Health Endowment Fund of the Ministry of Health related to COVID-19 disruptions in the Kingdom. This donation, which ranks as the largest given by a Saudi company, provides ventilators in intensive

care rooms, highly efficient air purification devices for quarantine, and protective tools for health practitioners and patients.

Our Corporate Citizenship Division launched an employee donation campaign, "Stay Home, Stay Safe," to support national efforts by local charities to combat the COVID-19 outbreak in the Kingdom. The money donated by employees is targeted to help vulnerable populations, specifically widows and orphans.

The campaign has provided over 10,000 food, hygiene, and edutainment packages to this group across the Kingdom. To date, the campaign has collected more than SR5.5 million from more than 15,000 employees. Donations will be matched 100% by Saudi Aramco once the campaign is completed.

### Saudi Aramco around the world

Saudi Aramco's global offices are also doing their part to ensure the world has access to the energy it needs, and to help protect local communities from the spread of COVID-19. Together, our global offices have committed to contributing more than \$3.5 million to support health care and disaster relief organizations.

Our Aramco Asia office facilitated donations of cash and critically needed medical supplies to the Red Cross Society in China. In South Korea, the office provided assistance to the Hope Bridge Korea Disaster Relief Association.

Aramco Europe donated funds to Italy's Fondazione Buzzi for intensive care units and other medical supplies.

Aramco Americas has donated money for medical services in cities where Aramco has research activities. In Detroit, home to one of our Global Research Centers, Dr. Xin He delivered more than 2,000 protective masks to Harper Hospital, which is playing a central role in the city's coronavirus response. The masks were donated in part by the North American Association of Chinese Engine Engineers (NAACEE), a group Aramco supports.

Aramco Americas also ordered 30,000 KN95 masks for delivery to the City of Houston, where it has its headquarters; and Aramco's subsidiary, the Motiva Refinery in Port Arthur, Texas, donated 1,200 PPE suits to the Re-

gional Emergency Operations Center for COVID-19 testing sites across Southeast Texas. The office has created an employee fundraising and company matching initiative in support of the Houston Food Bank, and the staff of *AramcoWorld* magazine has provided classroom guides and other multimedia sources on cross-cultural themes to support online teachers.

At home and around the world, Aramco people are rising to the challenge of protecting themselves, each other and their communities while supplying the world with vital supplies of energy.







## Best practices for shopping during Coronavirus

We advise you to utilize delivery app services to order your groceries, but when you need to make a necessary trip to the grocery store, please follow the below guidelines:



Prepare a shopping list before you leave home. This will reduce shopping time and avoid unnecessary trips for forgotten items



When entering the store, sanitize your hands with alcohol-based sanitizer and wear gloves



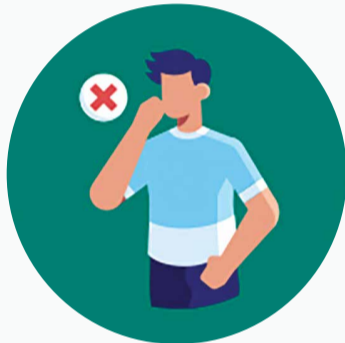
Sterilize the handle of your shopping cart using sterilized wet wipes



Maintain a distance of at least 1.5 meters between you and other shoppers



Do not touch products that you are not going to purchase



Do not touch your face when you are shopping



Use credit, or debit, cards for placing your payments



Sterilize your hands before leaving the store



Sterilize food cans using sterilized wet wipes



Wash your fruits and vegetables carefully



## How to safely receive groceries at your home?



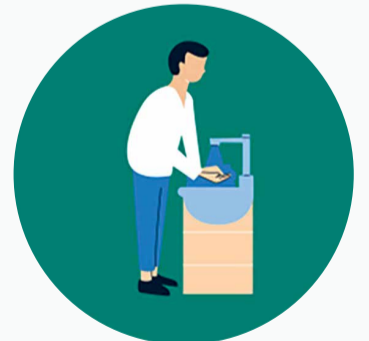
Keep a safe distance of at least 1.5 meters between you and the driver



Pay online or by card and avoid using cash



Dispose of bags and packaging as soon as they get delivered and remember to disinfect the packages before opening them



Make sure to wash your hands before and after you pick up the groceries from your doorstep



#WeAreAllResponsible



# resilient and prepared in the field

## employees key to maintaining business continuity

by Musherf Alamri

**Dhahran** — When Jon Johnson, a driller on Rig 910 in the Dammam Dome field, starts his 12-hour shift, he has a new chore before he can man the drilling console. Wearing white plastic gloves, he sprays a disinfectant solution on the buttons and knobs, and wipes it down.

This is just one of the many COVID-19 precautions Saudi Aramco and its Drilling and Workover (D&WO) organization is taking across operations to protect the health and well-being of our employees and contractors while activating its business continuity plan to maintain maximum sustainable production capacity.

"It is exactly for these unfortunate times that the company cultivates excellence in its people and systems — to ensure resilience, as well as building contingency plans," said AbdulHameed A. Al-Rushaid, D&WO vice president. This is not the first disruptive event, nor will it be the last one. I am proud of the company and our people."

Omar S. Al-Husaini, general manager of Drilling Operations, echoed Al-Rushaid's comments. "We have a proven track record of reliably delivering to our customers, and we are taking the necessary measures to maintain and preserve that," Al-Husaini said.

It is at times like these that the company's preparedness pays off, said chief drilling engineer Khalid A. Al Abdulgader. "We are now reaping the benefit of our strategic investments in technological solutions, talent development, and knowledge sharing."

D&WO Services Department (D&WOSD) manager Nayef K. Al Ghafel said it comes down to the company's investment in its people. "The company is reaping the dividends of its investment in human capital," said Al Ghafel. "Our people are fully empowered and engaged, and throughout this challenging ordeal, they are showing up and working diligently for company and country."

He further noted that they are critical to the success of the company's response, relying on employees to take the appropriate action quickly and consistently to avert potential operations disruptions.

### empowerment through awareness

This critical element means providing knowledge to personnel on how to protect themselves. In areas such as D&WO, a number of employees have been certified by Johns Hopkins Aramco Healthcare to raise awareness among their colleagues. Also, employees are working with vendors to raise awareness among contractor personnel.

Meanwhile, COVID-19 declarations must



Jon Johnson, a driller on Rig 910 in the Dammam Dome field starts his 12-hour shift by spraying a disinfectant solution on the buttons and knobs of the drilling console, and then wipes it down. This is just one of the many COVID-19 precautions Saudi Aramco's Drilling and Workover (D&WO) is performing across its operations to protect the health and well-being of its employees and contractors (Photo: Hatim B. Oweida/MPD).

be completed, and at entrances to all offices and sites, personnel are scanned by an infrared thermal scanner.

Fortunately, most logistics transactions have been digitalized, so physical interactions with vendors has been minimized.

Also, D&WOSD offices and workspaces have been sterilized with a human friendly chemical that has an enduring antiviral agent — this in addition to the ubiquitous sanitizer and soap dispensers.

### precautions on the frontlines

Precautions are no less stringent at operation sites such as drilling rigs. Twice a day, the rig medic takes and records the temperature of those at the site, as well as checking for symptoms. Also, those entering and leaving the rig site must have their temperature measured and their data recorded.

"While the safety and health of our employees always remains our top priority, I was very pleased to see the commitment and engagement of our front-line employees on our drill rigs during such difficult times," said Fahad A. Al-Mulaik, manager of the Southern Area Oil and Gas Drilling Department.

Aligned with the Ministry of Health's COVID-19 regulations, the company tracks implementation of controls across its operations while also extending full support to drilling contractors.

Front-line employees have adopted physical distancing. For example, crews in the Tanajib tool house have reduced the number of people per safety meeting and changed

the location to allow for a space of 2 meters between participants.

### updated preparations and responses

Emergency response plans have had to be updated to deal with COVID-19. For instance, a medically equipped and dedicated vessel has been prepared to transport workers from offshore rigs suspected of suffering from COVID-19 — a Marine Department initiative.

Also, key personnel who work in an office have been identified and equipped with laptops to be able to work remotely if that becomes necessary. The company also coordinated with vendors to do the same.

With some personnel unable to report to work due to preventive measures to stop the spread of COVID-19 (such as suspension of international flights), a dashboard was created to track the availability of employees, as well as personnel and equipment across service companies on a daily basis. This is used to reshuffle workload and market share between service companies, depending on the level of preparedness and available resources. This allows drilling targets to continue to be met.

When the authorities announced the curfew in the Kingdom, D&WOSD worked with Government Affairs to obtain the necessary permission letters to allow employees and contractors to commute to work or travel to rig sites, ensuring the continuity of operations, said Balaj S. Al-Otaibi, head of the Logistics and Communication Support Sec-



We have a proven track record of reliably delivering to our customers, and we are taking the necessary measures to maintain and preserve that.

— Omar S. Al-Husaini

tion. Within five days, 3,500 permission letters were issued for D&WO employees and contractors.

### weathering the storm

As COVID-19 impacts global supply chains, the company is well positioned with an ample inventory to weather the storm. For instance, we have 2,000 drilling bits that are sufficient for a whole year of drilling, as well as a six-month supply of drilling mud. This is augmented by a 100,000 barrel per day of mud recycling capacity, which reduces costs while contributing to environmental protection.

The inventory has been smartly leveraged across the entirety of drilling operations through digitization and optimizing costs. Because inventory is digitized, end users can request the materials digitally from the drilling rig site. Even the delivery trucks are tracked via GPS, ensuring efficiency and on-time delivery.

And while strain on supply chains are not new in the oil and gas industry, Saudi Aramco has been proactively building strategic relationships with key manufacturers, even enticing some to set up in-Kingdom facilities. These efforts contribute to enhancing the resilience of the supply chain.

"The preparation for, and reaction to, this international crisis has been second to none," said David P. Arnold, a senior drilling engineer consultant.



First from the right, Abdullah H. Otaibi, D&WO tool house assistant superintendent and second, Amilcar A. Aboo Muidine, a safety coordinator, lead a safety meeting in a Tanajib Port warehouse. Crews have reduced the number of people per safety meeting and changed the location to allow for two meters between participants, which is an example of frontline employees applying social distancing (Photo: Ding Alcayde/MPD).



These materials in the Tanajib Port yard will be transported to offshore rigs. D&WOSD has smartly leveraged the inventory across the entirety of drilling operations through digitization to optimize costs. (Photo: Ding Alcayde/MPD)



# students thriving in Aramco's e-classrooms

by Musherf Alamri

**Dhahran** — Beginning March 12, 3,900 Saudi Aramco Expatriate School students began attending classes, not at the company's seven school campuses, but from the comfort and safety of their homes via distance learning.

Similar to the actions of educational institutions Kingdomwide, the Saudi Aramco Expatriate Schools Division (SAESD) has adopted distance learning in response to the Ministry of Education's direction regarding taking precautions against COVID-19.

The experience for students and parents has been overwhelmingly positive.

"Everything is perfect ... the teacher is always online to answer questions," said one Dhahran Hills School student parent.

Others have seen that school via the internet during the COVID-19 outbreak has myriad benefits. "Our kids stay connected with the school and continue prospering emotionally and academically during the current stressful situation," said Hira Ikram, the parent of an Abqaiq School student.

## planning eases transition

This success did not come by chance. As early as February, an advanced planning team of instructional coaches, administrative staff, and technology specialists from SAESD began meeting to plan for business continuity, considering that schools in the Far East had to close for extend periods due to the COVID-19 outbreak. Their planning was aided by interviewing principles of impacted schools in China and Korea. The business continuity was finalized and documented.

"We had those plans in our back pocket, so to speak, because we know that if we needed to go to distance learning, it would be in an environment where there is a lot of anxiety in the community — it would not be just a calm day," said Benjamin L. Jacobs, a business system analyst in SAESD.

It is that proactive planning that allowed for a quick transition to distance learning, particularly when compared to benchmarked schools. Students had one day to relax, another one to prepare their workspaces, and then classes resumed online.

"We were fortunate that we had a team at our school investigating distance learning," said Courtney Longua, a Dhahran Middle School teacher. "I have been so impressed with how quickly both teachers and students have adapted to this learning model."

## four pillars of distance learning

In line with SAESD's mission, the dis-



Many teachers have fun using humor and creativity in the videos, such as Charlotte Murphy and Stephanie Ford. "Librarians and other teachers have been reading books aloud in costume; art, music, and physical education teachers have been posting all kinds of different creative and wellness lessons for the kids to enjoy and learn from," said Andrea Matza, a social studies teacher at Dhahran Middle School.



Every class starts with the teacher using video conference technology to talk with students and take attendance. Here, Matilde Pereira interacts with Dhahran teacher Peter Wetzel.

*Ras Tanura instructors Andres Vazquez, Lori Swets, and Christina Myers communicate through a visual streaming video connection. While physical distancing has provided its challenges, it will also help teachers and students alike embrace cutting-edge technology more thoroughly. "One of the amazing things is the amount of learning that has taken place for our teachers and for our students in using next generation learning tools — it has been astounding. When we get back to in-person instruction, SAESD is going to be an even better school."*



tance learning design takes a holistic approach to education and looks to nurture students' emotionally and academically, said Jacobs. The distance learning program is based on the following four pillars:

- **Structure:** Online classes start at 7:20 a.m. and end at 2:20 p.m. Students are expected to be at their workspace on time and fully attentive. This gives students a sense of still being in school, providing a predictable element in these uncertain times.

- **Balance:** One of the lessons learned from talking to schools in the Far East is the need to maintain a sustainable workload, as online learning requires extra ef-

fort from teachers and students alike. So, students do exercises during the classes but have no homework after classes; this allows them to unplug. In turn, teachers can focus on creating engaging content for students.

To encourage students to maintain their health, 45 minutes are allotted per school day for wellness. There are a range of prepared physical activity lessons to do, such as yoga.

- **Learning:** Teachers tailor their lessons to the online environment and leverage digital tools such as surveys and video editing software, which provides meaningful learning experiences to students.

Many teachers have fun using humor and creativity in the videos, said Andrea Matza, a social studies teacher at Dhahran Middle School. "Librarians and other teachers have been reading books aloud in costume; art, music, and physical education teachers have been posting all kinds of different creative and wellness lessons for the kids to enjoy and learn from," she said.

- **Connected:** Every class starts with the teacher using video conference technology to talk with students and take attendance. Then students complete the prepared activities for the lesson. At the end, the class regroups online to have a discussion, and students can ask questions.

"It was pretty wonderful watching my son's face light up as he connected with all the teachers through the videos," said a Dhahran Hills School student parent.

For 6- and 7-year-old students, online

learning mainly consists of written materials and videos about the interactive curriculum that parents can use with their children, said Sandra Childs, a first-grade teacher at Ras Tanura Elementary.

"My favorite part of distance learning has been the video chats with my students and parents. The parents have been positive and have given me encouragement and suggestions," she said.

From asking her students about their feelings, Tahnee Trebol, a second-grade homeroom teacher in Abqaiq School, discovered students were adapting well.

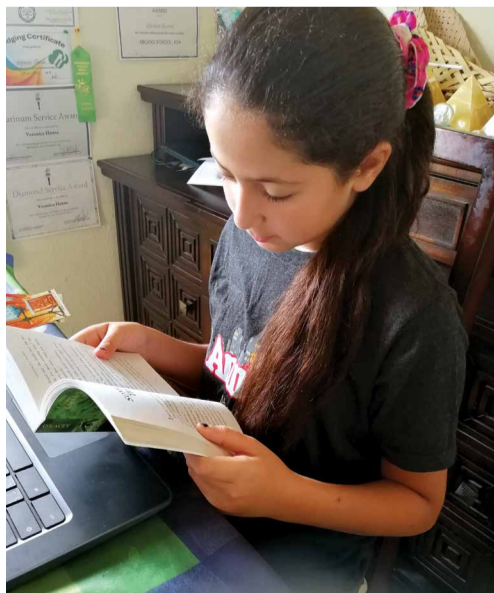
"They said they were happy to be spending more time with their families, grateful for being able to see their friends on Google Meet, and excited to be learning new things using the computer," Trebol said.

While the schools moved to distance learning for health and safety considerations, the experience has educational benefits, too, Jacobs said.

"One of the amazing things is the amount of learning that has taken place for our teachers and for our students in using next generation learning tools — it has been astounding. When we get back to in-person instruction, SAESD is going to be an even better school," he said.

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— Sandra Childs, a first-grade teacher at Ras Tanura Elementary



Distance learning isn't all about technology, as exemplified by Santiago Remy and Monica Hanna in Abqaiq.



# AramcoWorld brings lessons of the globe to schoolchildren stuck at home

by Johnny Hanson

In Austin, Texas, at Garza Independent High School, doors are shut and classrooms are empty.

On the school's website, a letter that principal Linda Webb wrote in reaction to the COVID-19 shutdown says, "All Garza students are expected to log on to Garza Online and continue their academic coursework remotely."

On any other day, U.S. history and economics teacher Jacqueline Vidal would be working closely with her students to prepare them for the upcoming state-wide achievement tests. Now, she finds herself at home due to a citywide lockdown, preparing to teach her students remotely.

"The first thought I had was about how I was going to continue to build a relationship with my students and not have that face-to-face time — how am I going to keep them engaged, and what creative things can I do with them?" said Vidal.

## AramcoWorld Classroom Guide

With little time to plan, Vidal started thinking about her economics lessons and wondered how she was going to present them in an interesting way that would hold their attention. So she turned to a resource she already knew well: *AramcoWorld's* Classroom Guide.

She went to the *AramcoWorld* website, scrolled through the more than 40 lessons, and clicked on an entry titled "Balancing Conservation and Economics." There, she said, she found a great lesson to give to her students.

"What's great about this lesson is that I

can teach economics and conservation in Asia using the *AramcoWorld* story, and then tie it back to a local perspective in the U.S.," she said.

*AramcoWorld* assistant editor Alva Robinson said the magazine is already designed for readers to explore different parts of the world, and it is part of the publication's mission to bridge people across cultures and places. The Classroom Guide builds off that.

"The Classroom Guide provides learning experiences for students and independent learners," Robinson said. "It serves as a repository of activities for classrooms and individuals that help enhance our readers' understanding of our subjects, while also deepening skills in reading, writing, and comprehension."

Vidal said she often uses the *AramcoWorld* magazine as a teaching tool because of its in-depth stories and beautiful pictures.

"I trust the resource, and to me, there is value in that," she said. "The most challenging thing to do is connect with your students, and these resources allow me to do that. They look at the stories and the pictures, and they begin to ask a lot of questions."

## over 15 years of coming into the classroom

*AramcoWorld* editor Dick Dougherty started the Classroom Guide in the print edition of the magazine in 2004 as a resource for teachers. He worked with freelance curriculum specialist Julie Weiss, who had previously produced educational supplements for *Newsweek*.

The free resource soon appeared on-



Texas teacher Jacqueline Vidal is using the *AramcoWorld Classroom Guide* to engage with her students now attending school from home during the coronavirus outbreak.

Visual Representations," and more.

"The Classroom Guide is an important outreach tool for the magazine," Dougherty said. "Teachers work really hard and don't have much time to plan, so we provide this resource because they are one of our most important stakeholders. The Classroom Guide allows teachers to jump-start their lesson planning by using the magazine. It's designed to be flexible and to inspire, and with it, they can reach classrooms of students, year after year."

## helping out more teachers and students

*AramcoWorld* digital editor Johnny Hanson said they are currently working to put the Classroom Guide in front of more students now in need of online resources. They are doing this through print, the *AramcoWorld* newsletter, and in social media.

"We see this as a great opportunity to help teachers, students and parents who are now acting as teachers, as they all try to keep up with schooling from home with dynamic resources," Hanson said. "Beyond our Classroom Guide, we are also highlighting our video channel, virtual tours, and recipes as people spend more time at home."

Teachers such as Vidal believe having this kind of educational resource is important now more than ever.

"There are teachers out there right now struggling to find resources they can be creative with," she said. "The *AramcoWorld Classroom Guide* is a great resource for teachers to have, all in one place."

line, providing lessons that meet certain U.S. educational core standards, all based on features in the magazine. Students and teachers can learn from topics such as "Problem Solving, Climate Change and Policy, Clarifying and Probing Questions," and "Evaluating Art as

## your voice

# distance learning is a lot of fun



by Duaa Mushahid  
Student at Dhahran Middle School

With the COVID-19 spreading rapidly, many schools have shut down, however, once again, Saudi Aramco Expatriate School is ahead of the game. The Distance Learning Program that they have developed and launched in this short time frame is truly amazing.

Distance learning (i.e., virtual school) is convenient, undoubtedly safer in the current situation, and ensures the continuation of the school year and is a lot of fun at the same time.

Some (parents ... ahem, ahem) may think virtual school is no better than normal school, but few can deny that virtual school is more convenient for parents and teachers. Students are able to sit at home and receive their education. Students get a few small short breaks in between core classes, not to mention a one-hour lunch break instead of the transportation shortened 15 minute lunch the students usually get with normal school.

A lot can be achieved during this long break, including playing a quick table tennis game with siblings in the garage, helping mother in the kitchen, a quick shower, the noon prayer, a check on dad when he decides to work from home.

Oh! Did I mention eating lunch somewhere in between?

We all must understand that distance learning has been implemented for a reason. COVID-19 is a serious matter, and distance learning is safer for teachers, students, and parents alike. During these troubled times, parents have been worried about their children's education and safety. However, their fears have been diminished thanks to distance learning and the use of available technology. Safety is clearly one of the top priorities for SAES.

Distance learning also improves the learning mechanism of students as they meet with their teacher at the start of class, are assigned a task, and then are dismissed to complete it. They then only have to check back in at the end of class to provide proof of their learning. In the time in between, they work on a task independently and practice their problem solving skills, with a possibility of seeking help from their teacher via Google Meet (another online tool available to SAES students). Teachers focus their attention on the students who may need help and provide guidance to overcome any obstacle.

After class, students also have the opportunity to meet online with their teachers during office hours for additional help. The school's tech department has set up a wonderful system and made all the tools available for kids, teachers, and parents to continue their education with minimal impact.

While virtual school doesn't offer electives or physical education, it does allow them to participate in Wellness and En-core activities. Teachers and administrators are doing a fabulous job to keep the kids active, motivated, and engaged.

Kids do miss meeting and interacting with their friends in person and participating in the social activities and sports, yet distance learning and the atmosphere created by parents at home keep the learning process going during these difficult times.

Overall, the benefits of distance learning outweigh the limitations. The safety and convenience of virtual school makes kids eager to learn and enjoy at the same time. Parents are busy, engaged, and also unconcerned regarding the safety of their kids. It also provides us with the opportunity to have more quality family time.

Your Voice reflects the thoughts and opinions of the writer, and not necessarily those of the publication.

# keeping safe in apartments and gated communities

If you are living in an apartment building or in a gated community, it is important to abide by the "Stay at Home" and 24-hour curfew restrictions.

Everyone has a role to play in stopping the spread of COVID-19 and protecting themselves, their family, and our communities. Here are a few tips to follow:

- **Avoid mixing with your neighbors**, even if you live in the same apartment building. Don't have your neighbors over to your house (adults or children).
- **Avoid visits with members of your**

**family** (parents, cousins, or siblings) who are not a part of your current household, even if they live within the gated community or in the same apartment building.

- **Observe physical distancing with individuals outside your household**. This includes interactions with people in the communal building spaces such as lobbies and outdoor areas.
- **Children should not have in-person playdates** within your gated community or apartment building.

- **Avoid recreational activity** around your gated community and communal building spaces such as lobbies and outdoor spaces; stay at home.

- **All household members should wash their hands regularly**. Wash with soap and water for 40 to 60 seconds, or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer for at least 20 seconds.

- **It is important that we all take care of our health**. However, some people in your household may need to be extra vigilant when it comes to precautions

and COVID-19 symptoms. Older people and people with preexisting medical conditions, such as diabetes or heart disease, appear to be more vulnerable to becoming severely ill with COVID-19.

- **If you or members of your household are exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19, call 937** (and contact JHAH if you are a registered patient). Self-isolate in a separate room from the rest of the family. For more information, read JHAH's "Precautionary Home Isolation Guide" available at [jhah.com/covid-19](http://jhah.com/covid-19).

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The Arabian Sun is a weekly publication issued free of charge by the Corporate Communication Support Department for Saudi Aramco employees.

North Admin Building, Room AN-1080, C-05A, Dhahran, Saudi Arabia  
Telephone (013) 876-0374  
Email: [publishing@aramco.com](mailto:publishing@aramco.com)  
ISSN: 1319-156X  
Articles may be reproduced provided The Arabian Sun is credited.

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Designer: Husam Nasr.

Articles and coverage can be requested through the company's CRM system.  
Correspondence may be addressed to the editor, North Admin Building, Room AN-1080, C-05A.

Saudi Arabian Oil Company (Saudi Aramco) is a joint stock company, with certificate of registration number 2052101105, having its principal office at P.O. Box 5000, Dhahran, Postal Code 31311, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and with fully paid capital of SAR 60,000,000,000.

