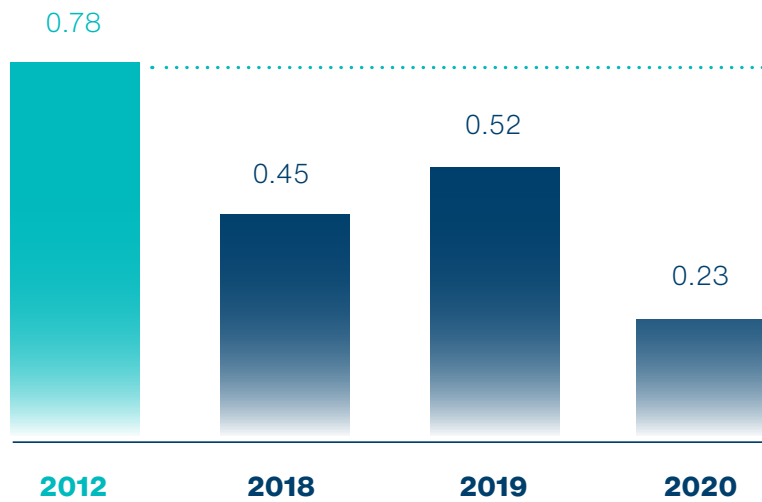


BILL CHIDESTER

## SHIFTING A SAFETY CULTURE

In 2020, we came closer than ever before to achieving our Commitment to Zero.

### RECORDABLE INJURIES (TRIR)



When Bill Chidester joined our Chocolate Bayou site in 2018 he knew the site was struggling with personal injuries. In fact, two recordable injuries occurred just hours before his first day on the job, bringing the total to seven mid-way through the year.

The senior environment, safety, security and health manager also knew he needed only two things to begin making a difference: empowerment from site leadership and a bit of patience. Fortunately, he found both.

“I noticed most of our injury reports indicated a failure to identify hazards,” said Chidester. He recalled watching a unit with one of the poorest safety records at his previous company reverse course entirely to become a top performer after he introduced a new way of thinking. It was called Hazard Recognition Plus™, a thought process that helps reveal unnoticed hazards by evaluating energy sources in a systematic manner.

Chidester brought his experience with HRP to leaders of the Chocolate Bayou site, who indicated early support for the program. But before there was even time for an official launch, support increased immensely.

“We attended the annual Ascend ESSH summit in November and presented our plan,” said Bill. He introduced HRP and the idea that properly identifying hazards is the critical first step to keeping our people safe.

Senior leaders didn’t just approve of the idea, they saw potential value in a one Ascend approach. “They felt this could help us across the company. Next thing I knew, we had alignment from the entire leadership team.”

Ascend began introducing HRP across all sites in 2019. Although Chidester and the Chocolate Bayou site led the way, success was not immediate. Injury rates were still unacceptable early in the year. “My biggest goal early on was to help people see the value,” said Chidester. “HRP is a tool, but if we set clear expectations and use the tool consistently to meet those expectations, behavior starts changing. Then people change, and that’s when you start to realize true culture change.”

As more HRP coaches were trained and employees started to better understand the tool, our safety performance improved considerably the second half of 2019. In 2020, we came closer than ever before to achieving our Commitment to Zero. Chidester says he’s especially proud of how the culture change is starting to be seen across Ascend.



After the Pensacola site was forced offline by Hurricane Sally, Ascend mustered every available resource to help. The first thing Pensacola leadership requested was additional HRP coaches from other sites to assist with hazard recognition. The idea was so well received it’s been used in several other major turnarounds since.

“We’re helping our fellow sites, but this experience is also giving our coaches new perspective on how to be better at hazard recognition,” Chidester said. “This is a strength we continue to develop.”