

4

CHEMICAL
ISSUES

The CPI's Points of Light

By DAVID THOMAS

As part of his inaugural Address, President Bush called for, "a new engagement in the lives of others...a new activism, hands-on and involved, that gets the job done." The CPI, however, has a long-standing history of community service, and efforts to be a good neighbor. Of late, the industry has focussed its community service efforts on the problems of education.

There are as many different ways to approach the complex problem of education in the United States as there are companies attempting solutions. Some companies focus on minority issues, others on elementary education, some on innovative curriculum development, while still others on revamping the entire American education system. The important thing, regardless of the approach taken, is that the chemical industry is playing an active role in the education of young people.

For example, Danbury, CT-based Union Carbide Corp. formed the Connecticut Business for Education Coalition (CBEC) as part of The Business Roundtable's (an association of US business leaders) acceptance of President Bush's June 1989 challenge to join the effort to upgrade the way teaching and learning are practiced in the nation's schools. According to the Business Roundtable's philosophy, "America's ability to compete, our democratic system and the future of our children depend upon all our children being educa-



Minority students are particular beneficiaries of Monsanto scholarships.

tionally successful."

Says Nancy Diebler, Carbide's assistant director of public issues, "The task force differs from business' former efforts related to education in that it is looking at bringing about a change in the way education is delivered." The new project is encouraging the search for practices based upon the well-known premise that "all children can learn at high levels".

This agenda, adopted nationwide by the Business Roundtable, includes nine components it considers critical to bringing about increased achievement for all students. The recommendations address drugs, violence, student motivation, and many other social problems affecting school age children.

St. Louis-based Monsanto Co.'s educational efforts, on the other hand, focus on higher education initiatives. For example, in partnership with the Detroit Urban League and Wayne State University, Monsanto is conducting a scholarship program aimed at addressing the acute shortage of minority engineers forecast for the coming years. In addition to providing financial assistance and summer work experience at a local Monsanto facility, students are paired up with mentors in the profession, through the Urban League's community network, who help them

through their potentially daunting undergraduate studies.

Monsanto Fund president John Mason states, "The scholarship program in and of itself is not unique, but I doubt that most corporations are supporting scholarships with the specific intention of holding the university administering the scholarship accountable for the success of the students receiving the scholarships." He adds, "Monsanto selected Wayne State as our partner because of their demonstrated commitment to the success of minority students."

As to why the choice of a minority-g geared scholarship, Mason says, "It is good business practice to cultivate minority talent for the future. It is good for the community, good for the students, and good for us."

Waste Management, Inc., Oak Brook, IL, and Amoco Corp., Chicago, have chosen to underwrite a 13-part television series examining the lives of people engaged in exploring the current scientific frontiers. The series, entitled *The New Explorers*, debuted on public television this January. Far more than simply being another educational television show, Secretary of Energy James Watkins sees programs such as *The New Explorers* as a means of using television to educate students in the classroom.