

2020 was a year of global challenge – working together will make 2021 much better

What a year it has been! A year ago, we were all looking forward to the possibilities of a new decade. Today, as the year comes to a close, we are happy to see 2020 behind us.

We don't usually write about events outside the energy industry. But this year is different. And most of you are probably feeling somewhat like we are – exhausted, frustrated and just plain sad. That being said; we must also acknowledge we are definitely the lucky ones. Most of us are able to work from home and maintain our incomes while generally being able to minimize our risk to the virus that is spreading pretty much everywhere.



Source: [pexels.com](https://www.pexels.com)

A global pandemic with catastrophic impact. Over 80 million cases of covid-19 and approaching 1.8 million deaths. In less than a year this virus has impacted almost every country on

earth. It cares not **what nation you live in, what your politics are, the colour of your skin or your religion.** Unfortunately, it does highlight the inequities in our societies and our weaknesses. Who is not completely overwhelmed by the disproportionate share of fatalities in old age homes highlighting how little we spend on caring for our elders (yet somehow, we can effectively maintain a bubble to keep professional athletes safe)? While many of us work from home to keep the virus away, those that earn the least are now classified as “**essential workers**” making sure we all have food on the table at considerable risk to themselves and their families. Health care workers are exhausted as ignorant so-called freedom fighters argue the importance of having freedom to get a hair cut or cite the attack on our civil liberties when asked to maintain distance or wear a mask.

And nothing frustrates us more than the ongoing war against science. From bizarre conspiracy theories (Bill Gates is trying to insert chips to control us,) to many just believing this virus is a hoax, **the move away from being interested in truth is alarming.** When asked to pull together for the war effort our parents and grandparents did what was necessary. And while some may have disagreed with government policies, there was no one who said our leaders were lying to us and the war was a hoax.

Thankfully, science knows no borders. The **absolutely miraculous rate at which vaccines have been developed** are testament to the hard work of scientists around the globe who worked together. The Chinese published the genome of the virus back in January for all to use. Vaccine trials took place in many countries to ensure the best possible data in the shortest time. Yet now we face the next threat to defeating this virus, **vaccine hesitancy.** Even prior to this pandemic the WHO defined vaccine hesitancy as a rising threat to global health.

2021 can be a year to look forward to. It will be difficult

at the beginning, but it can also be the year the pandemic comes to an end. However, the speed at which we come out of this is not guaranteed. As with most things in life, **success is up to us**. For the best possible outcome, we need to focus on three things:

- **Acknowledging the science and taking the advice of professionals**, both to protect ourselves, our families and our friends and colleagues from infection; and to encourage all to take the vaccine when available to them;
- In spite of our increasing pandemic fatigue, be willing to continue to **sacrifice** for the common good. As a society we have become selfish and value our own wants before the needs of others. This is **a teachable moment for our children**. Learning the value of sacrifice to the benefit of others is a life lesson that will benefit them forever; and
- All work together to our common goal. **Leaving poor countries behind will not hasten the end of this pandemic**. It took only months for the virus to reach every corner of the earth. To end, the efforts to eradicate it must have the same reach.

The nuclear industry has done well throughout these difficult times. This is because we have developed the systems necessary to keep our plants running and our workers safe. For that we should all be proud. **We are always prepared for a crisis and know exactly what to do when one is upon us**. We put the safety of our workers and the public above all else. And we collaborate to ensure the lessons learned from all the world's operating plants are known to each of us so we can keep improving.

For most of us, never have we had to face the fact that our normal daily activities can result in real, measurable, and immediate consequences. What each one of us does each day determines the path of this virus, with daily numbers of the

sick and the dead, and the associated economic impact, showing us the outcome of our actions. The only viable answer is to work together to make good choices and exhibit the right behaviours to save lives, shorten the pandemic and ultimately eliminate the virus as a global threat.

Hopefully, we will then take the time to learn the important lessons from this experience and make the societal changes necessary to protect and improve the lives of those who are most vulnerable while being better prepared for the next challenges the world throws at us.

Once again thank you for reading our blog this year. Wishing you and your families a very happy and healthy 2021.

If you have an interest in seeing a topic covered in one of our upcoming blogs, please let us know. We welcome the opportunity to write about new topics of interest to you, our readers.