



## THE CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

March 12, 2004

### MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

The NTSB was called to action, once again, to the capsizing of the "Lady D," a passenger taxi on Baltimore's Inner Harbor, which occurred last weekend. Two people died and three were initially missing as the city of Baltimore and the families seek answers as to why this accident occurred. The NTSB will focus its efforts with vigor to determine the probable cause and contributing factors which led to this tragedy.

Safety in all modes has always been the NTSB's mission and goal. With five of the last six most recent launches in marine safety, a new horizon of concern is developing. The Lady D represents a form of transportation as would a bus, train, taxi or plane. This is why the NTSB's focus on safety in all modes is critical as congestion and growth require new alternatives to traditional travel patterns.

*Ellen Engleman Conners*

### NTSB Successfully Launches Phase II of Outreach Plan

The NTSB piloted a new phase of its communication outreach program to support public access by providing a satellite uplink at the Board meeting on March 9th. "This is Phase II of our efforts," said Chairman Ellen Engleman Conners, "building on the web casting of our public hearings live via the internet, which we initiated 7 months ago." The web casts and satellite transmission support electronic government initiatives to use information technology to create efficient and cost effective ways to deliver government services.

### NTSB Investigates Capsizing of Water Taxi In Baltimore



NTSB investigators survey the damage to the "Lady D." The NTSB launched a full team to the accident site.

On March 6th, the Office of Marine Safety launched to the scene of the water taxi accident in Baltimore, MD. At approximately 4:00 pm, the pontoon boat "Lady D" capsized, and 25 passengers and crew fell into Baltimore Harbor. Two passengers were killed, and three were initially missing. The NTSB investigative team consists of specialists in vessel operations, marine engineering, and survival factors; an NTSB meteorologist; technical experts from the Office of Research and Engineering; and representatives from Public Affairs, Government Affairs and Transportation Disaster Assistance. NTSB Chairman Ellen Engleman Conners served as the on-scene spokesman.

Special thanks to **Bill Woody, Tom Roth-Roffy, Morgan Turrell, Mariette Burer, Lauren Peduzzi, Terry Williams, Erik Grosop, Patrick McCarthy, David Clark, Greg Salottolo, Jim Skeen, Doug Brazy, Kevin Renze, Cheryl McCullough and Lucille Waldren.**

#### Did You Know?

The Office of Marine Safety (MS) has 15 total employees, with 10 accident investigators, located in the Washington, DC headquarters. Since May 2003, MS has launched on eight accident investigations, including the boiler room explosion on the SS Norway, the capsizing of the Taki Too, the Staten Island Ferry Accident, and the Baltimore Water Taxi accident.

# National Transportation Safety Board

## Academy Hosts Two Successful Courses



Participants during a witness interviewing exercise at the Academy.

Congratulations on two successful courses at the Academy this week. The "Investigating Human Fatigue Factors in Transportation Accidents" course (March 10-11) was attended by 124 students from across the transportation industry, and the "Transportation

Disaster Response - Family Assistance" course (March 9-11) was attended by 53 students from across the commercial transportation industry. Special thanks to **Malcolm Brenner, Jana Price, Paula Sind-Prunier, Burt Simon, Steve Jenner, Rick Narvell, Bruce Magladry, Dennis Diaz, Sharon Bryson, Erik Grosf, and Brian Fiffick**. Both courses were successful and are scheduled to be hosted in the fall.

## On the Hill...

Chairman Ellen Engleman Connors met this week with Senator Mikulski, Congressman Cummings, Congressman Cardin, and Congressman Bartlett to brief them on the Baltimore Water Taxi Accident. The Chairman will meet with House Transportation Appropriations Chairman Istook and Congressman Oberstar next week, as well as the Senate Transportation Appropriations staff to discuss the NTSB FY 2005 budget.



**Member Dick Healing** met with Dr. Manoj Patankar, Professor of Aviation Science at Parks College, St. Louis University, at the Safety Across High Consequence Industries Conference. Mr. Healing delivered a presentation on the role of the NTSB with specific examples from each mode of transportation. The 150 attendees at the dinner were from aviation and medical communities.

## Board Reports on Minot and Everglades Accidents



NTSB investigators in Minot, ND

The NTSB met on March 9th to release the findings, probable cause and safety recommendations of two major accident investigations — the train derailment in Minot, ND, and the sinking of a tour boat, Panther, in the Everglades National Park.

In the Minot report, the board determined that Canadian Pacific's rail inspection procedures are inadequate, which allowed undetected cracks to grow to critical size and completely fracture. Contributing to the severity of the accident was the failure of five tank cars and the instantaneous release 146,000 gallons of anhydrous ammonia. "This accident demonstrates how critical it is that we never relax our commitment to safety, said NTSB Chairman Ellen Engleman Connors. "We must make use of every safety tool, and every piece of technology that helps us identify and eliminate risks in our transportation system." During the Panther meeting, the Board determined that a hull breach from an earlier grounding was the cause of the sinking of a tour boat in the Everglades National Park. The Panther, with 34 passengers and crew on board, sank in 12 feet of water. Stowage problems also prevented passengers from accessing lifejackets during the sinking. The Board recommended that the National Park Service require tour boat operators to establish preventative maintenance procedures and to ensure oversight of these programs, and to the accessibility and appropriately sized lifejackets for all passengers.