

and American Public Gas Association) to discuss direct assessment technology. The workshop is intended to provide a forum for the discussion of direct assessment technology as it relates to natural gas pipeline integrity management. RSPA/OPS will gather issues presented at the workshop needing additional clarification or guidance material development.

DATES: Tuesday, November 4th, 2003, from 7 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

ADDRESSES: The public may attend the meeting at the Wyndham Greenspoint North Hotel, 12400 Greenspoint Drive, Houston, Texas 77060, (281) 875-2222, <http://www.wyndhamhouston.com>

Operators of natural gas transmission pipelines are urged to attend. To facilitate meeting planning, advance registration for these meetings is strongly encouraged and can be accomplished online at the following Web site: <http://primis/rspa.dot.gov/meetings>

Members of the public are welcome to attend the workshop. An opportunity will be provided for the public to ask questions or make short statements on the topics under discussion. You may submit written comments by mail or deliver to the Dockets Facility, U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), Room PL-401, 400 Seventh Street, SW, Washington, DC 20590-0001. It is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. You also may submit written comments to the docket electronically. To do so, log onto the following Internet Web address: <http://dms.dot.gov>. Click on "Help & Information" for instructions on how to file a document electronically. All written comments should identify the docket and notice numbers which appear in the heading of this notice. Anyone who would like confirmation of mailed comments must include a self-addressed stamped postcard.

Anyone is able to search the electronic form of all comments received into any of our dockets by the name of the individual submitting the comment (or signing the comment, if submitted on behalf of an association, business, labor union, etc.). You may review DOT's complete Privacy Act Statement in the April 11, 2000, issue of the **Federal Register** (Volume 65, Number 70; Pages 19477-78) or you may visit <http://dms.dot.gov>.

Information on Services for Individuals with Disabilities: For information on facilities or services for individuals with disabilities or to request special assistance at the meeting, contact Juan Carlos Martinez

(tel: 202-366-1933; E-mail: juan.martinez@rspa.dot.gov).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Zach Barrett, (tel: 405-954-5559; E-mail zach.barrett@rspa.dot.gov), regarding the subject matter of this notice. Additional information about gas integrity management can be found at <http://primis.rspa.dot.gov/gasimp/index.htm>. You can read comments and other material in the docket on the Internet at: <http://dms.dot.gov>.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Direct Assessment is an integrity assessment method that utilizes a process to evaluate certain threats to pipeline integrity. It consists of a combination of pipeline corrosion assessment techniques and data integration. The Pipeline Safety Improvement Act of 2002 required RSPA/OPS to issue regulations, not later than December 17, 2003, prescribing standards for an operator's conduct of risk analysis and adoption and implementation of an integrity management program and for defining direct assessment. RSPA/OPS issued a notice of proposed rulemaking on January 28, 2003, proposing regulations to require a gas transmission operator to conduct a risk analysis and adopt an integrity management program. As part of the required integrity management program, each operator of a gas transmission pipeline facility must conduct a baseline integrity assessment. RSPA/OPS defines direct assessment as a primary assessment technique for any transmission pipelines or as a supplement to other assessment techniques. Although the application of corrosion assessment techniques such as Close-Interval or Direct Current Voltage Gradient surveys have been in place for some time, their integration with other information in a structured process to identify integrity concerns is a new industry practice for many pipeline operators. NACE International has published Standard RPO502-2002 "Pipeline External Corrosion Direct Assessment Methodology," providing a recommended practice for external corrosion direct assessment. NACE International is also developing standards for internal corrosion and stress corrosion cracking direct assessment methodologies. The adoption of these standards into the pipeline safety regulations is being considered by RSPA/OPS. RSPA/OPS and NAPSR recently participated in several direct assessment demonstration programs sponsored by the industry to further knowledge and discussions regarding the implementation of direct

assessment methodologies for integrity management.

RSPA/OPS is co-sponsoring this public workshop with NAPSR and the industry trade associations to solicit comments on improving and understanding direct assessment technology as it relates to the proposed gas integrity management regulation.

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 60102, 60109, 60117.

Issued in Washington, DC, on October 1, 2003.

Stacey L. Gerard,

Associate Administrator for Pipeline Safety.

[FR Doc. 03-25420 Filed 10-7-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-60-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Research and Special Programs Administration

Notice of Meeting

AGENCY: Research and Special Programs Administration (RSPA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice; Pipeline Safety: Final Project Review Meeting.

SUMMARY: RSPA's Office of Pipeline Safety (OPS) and the Gas Technology Institute (GTI), Des Plaines, IL, have funded a research program to study parameters pertinent to the application of the magnetic flux leakage (MFL) and Nonlinear Harmonics (NLH) technologies to in-line inspection of pipelines. This research was managed by GTI and performed by the Battelle Memorial Institute, Columbus, Ohio (Battelle) and the Southwest Research Institute, San Antonio, Texas, (SwRI). RSPA/OPS and GTI invite pipeline industry, in-line inspection vendors, pipeline trade association representatives, and the public to a project review meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to present a final report on the progress and findings of the research. The meeting is open to all and no registration is required. The presentations at the meeting will include an overview of the project, a technical review, and the results of technology transfer.

DATES: The meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 28, 2003, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held in conference room 4438-40 at U.S. Department of Transportation, 400-7th Street, SW., Washington, DC 20590. All non-federal personnel must enter the building through the Southwest entrance at 7th and E Streets, SW., and must present a photo-ID to receive a temporary building pass.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Gopala (Krishna) Vinjamuri, Agreement Officer's Technical Representative, RSPA/OPS, by phone at (202) 366-4503; by fax at (202) 366-4566; or by e-mail at gopala.vinjamuri@rspa.dot.gov. You may also contact Dr. Albert Teitsma, Program Manager, Gas Technology Institute, by telephone at (847) 768-0974, by fax at (847) 768-0501, or by e-mail at albert.teitsma@gastechnology.org.

Background

This research program began in 1996. The first phase of the MFL technology research (DTRS56-96-C-0010, *In-Line Inspection Technologies for Mechanical Damage and Stress Corrosion Cracking (SCC) in Pipelines*), was fully funded by RSPA/OPS. Battelle worked with its research partners, SwRI and Iowa State University, to complete this phase of the research. GRI provided technical and project management assistance.

Magnetic flux leakage (MFL) is the most commonly used in-line inspection (IL) technology for detecting pipe wall corrosion. Until about 1996, the technology was not capable of reliably detecting mechanical damage (gouges and scratches) or long, thin axial defects, both of which are common causes of pipeline failures.

Battelle designed an intelligent MFL in-line inspection tool ("smart pig") and was responsible for data acquisition and analysis using GRI's Pipeline Safety Simulation Facility (PSF) in Ohio. Natural and fabricated pipe samples with corrosion and other defects were used to evaluate the capabilities of the Battelle device. SwRI conducted mechanical testing and studied the feasibility of non-linear harmonics (NLH) for in-line inspection applications. The Iowa State University researchers attempted to develop a neural network analysis process to analyze MFL signals and determine by trained pattern recognition the extent of metallurgical damage. The 2000 final report on this part of research is available on the OPS Web site, at primis.rspa.dot.gov—click on > Pipeline Safety Research and Development > Recent Projects > R&D Database > Inline Inspection/Pigging and, finally, > In-Line Inspection Technologies for Mechanical Damage and SCC in Pipelines.

To continue this research, RSPA/OPS co-funded an additional \$1,180,000 for a 3-year project of advanced research and development. GTI was the program manager, and Battelle and SWRI were the research partners. The project, DTRS656-00-H-0004, *Better Understanding of Mechanical Damage*, focused on designing a smart pig

capable of circumferential (transverse) magnetization for detecting longitudinally oriented cracks, crack-like defects, and mechanical damage defects, particularly gouges. The project scope included the determination of criteria for assessing the relative severity of detected defects and advanced research in NLH tool design and analysis. As the research progressed, additional analyses and testing were identified that added value to the project.

The tentative agenda for the meeting is as follows.

Welcome—Stacey Gerard
Introduction, History and Achievements—Gopala Vinjamuri
Fit with IMP Rule; Effective Technologies—Keith Leewis
Statistics; Progress in Safety; SOA—Harvey Haines
Mechanical Damage R&D—Harvey Haines
Break
Project Organization and Overview—Albert Teitsma
Battelle R&D for Mechanical Damage—Bruce Nestleroth
SwRI R&D for Nonlinear Harmonics—Al Crouch
Technology Transfer—Alan Dean
Questions and Answers
Lunch
Mechanical Damage Detection/Characterization—Graham Chell, Bruce Nestleroth
Implementation of MFL Decoupling—Alan Dean
Final Questions and Answers
Conclusions—Gopala Vinjamuri

Issued in Washington, DC, on October 3, 2003.

James K. O'Steen,

Deputy Associate Administrator for Pipeline Safety.

[FR Doc. 03-25521 Filed 10-7-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-60-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**Research and Special Programs Administration****Pipeline Safety: Stress Corrosion Cracking (SCC) Threat to Gas and Hazardous Liquid Pipelines**

AGENCY: Research and Special Programs Administration (RSPA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice; issuance of advisory bulletin.

SUMMARY: RSPA's Office of Pipeline Safety (OPS) is issuing this advisory notice to owners and operators of gas and hazardous liquid pipelines to consider the threat from stress corrosion

cracking (SCC) when developing and implementing Integrity Management Plans. Operators should determine whether their pipelines are susceptible to SCC and assess the impact of SCC on pipeline integrity. Based on this evaluation, an operator should prioritize application of additional in-line inspection and hydrostatic testing and take actions to remediate problem areas.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Mike Israni, (202) 366-4571; or by e-mail, mike.israni@rspa.dot.gov. This document can be viewed at the OPS home page at <http://ops.dot.gov>. General information about the RSPA/OPS programs may be obtained by accessing RSPA's home page at <http://rspa.dot.gov>.

I. Advisory Bulletin (ADB-03-05)

To: Owners and Operators of Gas and Hazardous Liquid Pipeline Systems.

Subject: Stress Corrosion Cracking (SCC) Threat to Gas and Hazardous Liquid Pipelines.

Purpose: To advise owners and operators of natural gas and hazardous liquid pipeline systems to consider stress corrosion cracking as a possible safety risk on their pipeline systems and to include SCC assessment and remediation measures in their Integrity Management Plans.

Advisory: Each owner and operator of a gas or hazardous liquid pipeline system should assess the risk of stress corrosion cracking (SCC). Pipeline owners and operators should evaluate their systems for the presence of risk factors for high pH (9-11) SCC or near-neutral pH (6-8) SCC. Criteria for high pH SCC can be found in Appendix A3.3 of standard ASME B31.8S. If conditions for SCC are present, a written inspection, examination, and evaluation plan should be prepared and appropriate action should be taken in accordance with Appendix A3.4 of standard ASME B31.8S. RSPA/OPS will soon publish a final rule on the integrity management program for gas transmission pipelines in high consequence areas that incorporates requirements for addressing SCC threats by referencing Appendix A3 of standard ASME B31.8S. Although criteria and mitigation plans for near-neutral pH (6-8) SCC are not addressed in this standard, NACE International (NACE) is currently developing a standard on Direct Assessment of Stress Corrosion Cracking. Also, NACE will soon issue a technical committee report, *External Stress Corrosion Cracking of Underground Pipelines*, to provide information on SCC for hazardous liquid pipelines.