

PIPELINE RISK MANAGEMENT

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Assessment
Quality Team

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OPS and Industry Host Risk Management Electronic Town Meeting

On June 5, 1997, Secretary of Transportation Rodney E. Slater and Associate Administrator for Pipeline Safety Richard Felder kicked off the first in a series of Risk Management Electronic Town Meetings. The meeting was broadcast live via satellite to locations nationwide and via Internet to individuals at their personal computers.

Through discussion and role play by DOT staff, state, and local officials and representatives of industry, viewers received background information on the Department of

Transportation's (DOT) Pipeline Safety Risk Management Demonstration Program and were enlightened about how the selection process for the demonstration projects will work. The audience also had a chance to call in and ask questions of panelists.

During his opening remarks, Secretary Slater discussed DOT's changing role in the regulatory process and, in particular, the Office of Pipeline Safety (OPS) and the pipeline industry's important role in implementing the Risk Management

Demonstration Program. He stated, "Risk management is common sense government because it allows greater flexibility to put resources where they are needed most. That will, in turn, serve all of us better. It will give companies an improved basis to make their investment decisions more economically."

He went on to explain, "Safe and sound pipelines are all of our responsibility and truly demand a partnership effort. That is why we are here today, to open a dialogue about the pipeline risk management initiative."

Rich Felder emphasized the importance of expanding communications through the use of new technologies and expressed his hope that this broadcast, and the process described during the program "will lead to more productive interactions among all the parties concerned about pipeline transportation." Mr. Felder would like to express his sincere appreciation and thanks to OPS and the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Emergency

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Electronic Town Meeting (continued)

Education Network (EENET) staff, state and local officials, and industry representatives who helped to make this initiative a success.

To encourage participation among local government officials, DOT selected EENET for the broadcast. EENET has been broadcasting for more than 10 years and has an extensive audience in the fire service, emergency management, and local government communities. The broadcast was also made possible with support from the pipeline industry. Chevron and Shell Corporations hosted the live broadcast segments in Houston, TX, and San Francisco, CA.

Videotapes of the broadcast will be distributed to each of the OPS Regional Offices, the state pipeline safety representatives, the Federal Emergency Management Agency State Offices, and the pipeline companies that participated in the program. OPS Headquarters will also lend copies of the tape to interested individuals. To obtain additional information about the video loan program, please contact Lisa Garland at (202) 366-4996.

Watch for Future Broadcasts

OPS plans to air regular and systematic broadcasts to provide updates on pipeline safety issues and to provide progress reports on the risk management demonstration projects. These programs will be shorter, perhaps one-hour segments, as opposed to this initial three-hour information program. A newscast format is proposed with lead stories, local/regional news, public interest

clips, etc., to provide a better focus on topics. The next electronic town meeting is being planned for the fall of 1997.

We Need Your Assistance

Experience gained with this first broadcast has provided insight about planning for future town meeting broadcasts. To broaden our outreach, we are developing a mailing list of contacts for local cable companies; for municipal, county and state agency public access channels; and companies who

may be interested airing future programming.

This is where we need your assistance—please provide us with the names, addresses, and phone numbers of your local cable companies, public access or education channel, or company contacts who may be interested in receiving future electronic town meetings as soon as possible. You may provide this information via the OPS Home Page [Http://OPS.DOT.GOV](http://OPS.DOT.GOV) or by contacting Eben Wyman at (202) 366-0918 or Cheryl Whetsel at (202) 366-4431.

OPS Designs Data System for Risk Management Demonstration Program

The Office of Pipeline Safety (OPS) is creating a data system to collect and distribute information about the Risk Management Demonstration Program. The new Pipeline Risk Management Information System (PRIMIS) will help OPS perform project consultation, approval, and audit functions, and will also support communication with states, local safety officials, and the general public about the risk management demonstration projects. PRIMIS will be used to track significant meetings, program milestones, events, commitments, and follow-up dates during the consultation process.

Elements of PRIMIS information will be summarized and made available through an Internet link. Information about each of the demonstration projects, such as summaries of the Letters of Intent and Prospectus, along with the status of the review process will be made available. In addition, individuals will be able to provide information to or ask questions of OPS directly through their Internet connection to PRIMIS.

Progress on the development of this data system will be provided in future issues of the newsletter. For additional information, contact Patrick Ramirez at (602) 379-3646.

Upcoming Events

- August 4-8: National Association of State Pipeline Representatives (NAPSR) Southwest Region Meeting. Contact: Anne Marie Joseph (202) 366-2410.
- August 11-15: Central Region Risk Management Orientation, Minneapolis, MN. Contact: Cheryl Whetsel (202) 366-4431.
- August 18-22: Southern Region Risk Management Orientation, Nashville, TN
- August 18-22: Eastern NAPSR Meeting
- August 27-28: Regulatory Negotiation Meeting on Operator Qualifications, Washington, DC. Contact Eben Wyman (202) 366-0918.
- September 8 - Public meeting on pipeline corrosion control issues held in association with the NACE Fall Committee meetings in Oakbrook, IL. Contact Richard Hurlaux, (202) 366-1640.
- September 8-12: "Pipeline Week" Conference sponsored by *Pipeline and Gas Industry* magazine, Houston, TX. Stacey Gerard will speak on risk management. Contact Joe Caldwell (703) 875-8775.
- September 17: OPS is tentatively scheduled to air the second Electronic Town Meeting.
- September 22-26, Western Region NAPSR Meeting
- October 30 - OPS public meeting (tentatively scheduled) on use of remote control valves in interstate natural gas pipelines in Houston, TX. Contact Richard Hurlaux, (202) 366-1640.
- November 20 - OPS public meeting on risk management, Adam's Mark Hotel, Houston, TX. Contact Janice Morgan, (202) 366-2392.

OPS Program Highlights:

March 27: *Federal Register* notice is published, inviting pipeline operators to submit Letters of Intent (LOI) proposing demonstration projects for the Pipeline Risk Management Demonstration Program. The notice clarifies earlier guidance on selection criteria, on the requirement that participating companies have clear and established compliance records, and on the means of incorporating input from other agencies into the review process. Operators may submit LOIs until July 25, 1997.

March - July: Ten LOI's are received.

April: The December 9, 1996, draft of the Performance Measures Guidance is available for review through the OPS Web Site at: <http://opspm.volpe60.dot.gov>.

April - June: The first in a series of four-day Risk Management Program orientation sessions is presented to OPS Regional Directors, regional engineers, OPS staff, state inspectors, and industry participants. Two one-day seminars are provided in California (State Fire Marshal and CA Public Utilities Commission) and Oregon.

June 5: OPS airs its first electronic town meeting to discuss the Risk Management Demonstration Program.

April 30: National Association of Pipeline Safety Representatives passes a resolution to sponsor a Quality Action Team to study the possible implementation of a risk management demonstration program for local distribution companies (LDC).

May 12-16: The New York Public Service Commission hosts a Risk Management Training Seminar for

gas and liquid pipeline operators and regulatory personnel. Approximately 125 distribution company representatives, state regulators, and interstate operators attend. OPS and Transportation Safety Institute (TSI) personnel provide the risk management training and regulatory update.

June 26: A working group with representatives from DOT, Department of Energy, Department of Interior's Minerals Management Agency, and Department of Labor sponsor a one-day workshop on performance measures for health, safety, and environmental protection issues. Presenters discuss performance measures used in a variety of voluntary programs, including DOT's Pipeline Risk Management Program initiative. The program is held at DOT/MMS in Herndon, VA.

July 13-15: American Gas Association Annual Legal Forum is held in Napa, CA. Kelley Coyner, DOT Deputy Research and Special Programs Administrator speaks on risk management.

OPS Receives 10 Letters of Intent

As of July 18, 1997, OPS had received 10 Letters of Intent (LOI) from operators waiting to participate in the Risk Management Demonstration Program. OPS has finished screening the first four LOIs. The balance will be screened this month. OPS plans to have several demonstration projects underway in 1997.

OPS Hosts Joint Government-Industry Risk Management Orientation Workshops

The Office of Pipeline Safety (OPS) is hosting a series of four-day workshops designed to prepare federal, state, and industry personnel for their roles in the Risk Management Demonstration Program. Three regional workshops have been held in Alexandria, VA, Houston, TX, and San Diego, CA. Representatives of OPS, the states, and industry attended each workshop. Two additional workshops are planned for fiscal year (FY) 1997. We anticipate that the Transportation Safety Institute will begin offering general risk management seminars in FY 1998.

Objectives of the Risk Management Orientation

The risk management orientation will prepare:

- The Project Review Team (PRT), who will perform their role in the demonstration program;
- State representatives and consultants, who will provide input to and support the PRT; and
- Companies who have submitted Letters of Intent or who are interested in possibly participating in the demonstration program.

The orientation provides details on OPS' risk management program, the application process, and the roles and responsibilities of the Project Review Team. In addition, instructors cover development of project-specific performance measures, explain what achieving superior performance means, describe the audit process, and conduct practical

exercises to show how the consultation process will work.

Who Should Participate

The following people will benefit from this orientation:

- Federal region and headquarters employees;
- State pipeline safety representatives; and
- Industry representatives from companies that intend to or have submitted a Letter of Intent. On a space-available basis, others interested in participating in the demonstration program in the near future also are welcome.

Remaining Class Dates and Locations

Upcoming workshops are scheduled for the following dates and locations:

Central Region

August 12-15 Minneapolis, MN

Southern Region

August 19-22 Nashville, TN

For Additional Information

Space is still available for the remaining classes. For additional information or to register for the Risk Management Orientation, contact Cheryl Whetsel at (202) 366-4431.

Risk Management Orientation Program Registration Form

Class Schedule (check one)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Region	Class Dates	Location of Training	Registration Deadline
<input type="checkbox"/> Central Region (IA, IL, IN, KS, MI, MN, OH, MO, NB, ND, SD, WI)	August 12-15, 1997	Minneapolis, MN	July 21
<input type="checkbox"/> Southern Region (AL, AR, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, SC, TN, Puerto Rico)	August 19-22, 1997	Nashville, TN	July 30

Note: Classes begin Tuesday at 8:30 a.m. and end Friday at noon.

Student Name _____

Business Phone _____ Fax Number _____

Employer _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Time is running out - Fax your registration immediately to: Cheryl Whetsel (202) 366-4566.

The Risk Tutor—Basic Concepts in Risk Management

By Jim Von Herrmann
Cycla Corporation

This is the fourth in a series of articles on the basic concepts in risk management. The initial article described the three basic components of a risk management program: risk assessment; risk control and decision support; and performance monitoring and feedback. In subsequent issues, we described the risk assessment and the risk control and decision support processes. This article focuses on performance monitoring and feedback.

Performance Monitoring and Feedback

In the first two steps of the overall risk management process, current risks are assessed and a set of risk control activities is selected to control these risks. Performance monitoring and feedback provides a basis for measuring the effectiveness of specific risk-control decisions and of the entire risk management program, and is used to identify improvement opportunities.

Performance monitoring and feedback addresses the following questions:

- What improvements are expected from the risk control decisions?
- What measures can best capture these expected outcomes?
- Are the selected risk control activities having the intended effects?
- How can the overall risk management process be improved?

The performance monitoring and feedback process element, and its relationship to the other risk man-

agement process elements is illustrated in Figure 1.

As described in *Guidance on Performance Measures*, a risk management building block produced by the Joint Performance Measures Workgroup, operators that participate in the Risk Management Demonstration Program will provide two types of performance measures:

- “Project-specific” performance measures selected to monitor the effectiveness of their approved

risk management demonstration projects; and

- “Program-wide” performance measures that have been identified to enable the Office of Pipeline Safety (OPS) to assess the effectiveness of risk management as a potential regulatory alternative and to enhance communication with stakeholders during the demonstration program.

Each type of performance measure is discussed below:

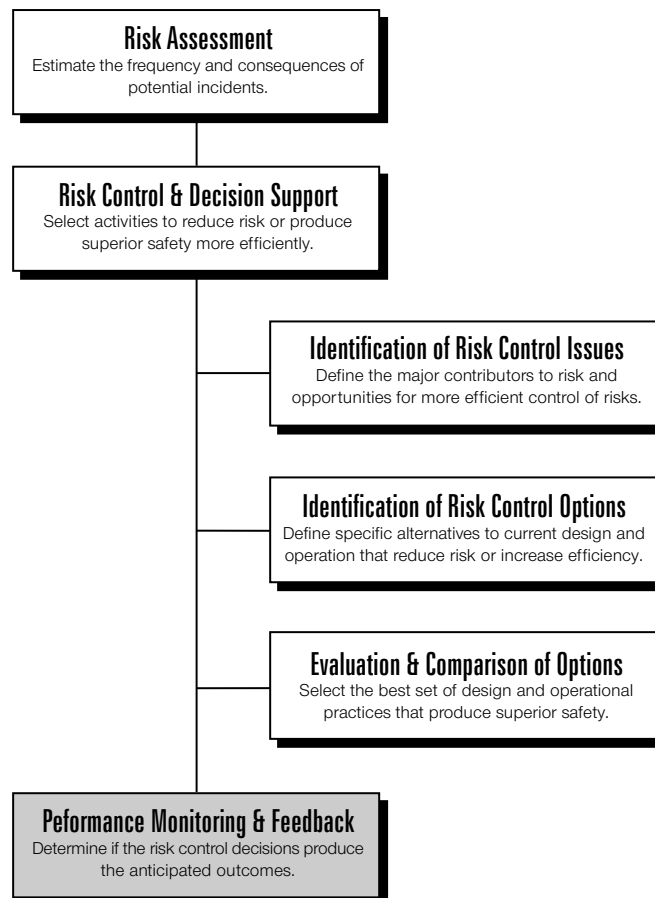


Figure 1. The Risk Control & Decision-Support Process

The Risk Tutor *(continued)*

Project-Specific Performance Measures

Project-specific measures quantify the performance of a subset of a pipeline system in a risk management demonstration project. Selection of these project-specific performance measures will depend on the expected outcomes of the demonstration project and should reflect the selected risk control activities. The operator proposes these measures during the application process; OPS approves them before it accepts the operator into the Risk Management Demonstration Program.

Project-specific performance measures should:

- Support the intent of the risk management initiative in achieving superior overall safety;
- Relate to the risk control decisions being made in each proposed application, and track their short-term and long-term effectiveness;
- Document starting conditions, either through historical data, current physical data, new test data, or comparison with similar segments;
- Establish expected outcomes from risk-control decisions in the form of discrete values or ranges for each measure; and
- Enable auditing, monitoring, and documentation of performance.

One of the challenges in selecting direct performance measures for pipelines is that incidents are relatively infrequent. Performance monitoring with traditional event measures (e.g., reportable incidents) may not identify statistically significant trends.

Therefore, risk management programs should identify precursors or anticipative performance measures that indicate activities or events affecting pipeline integrity with the potential to cause a product release.

Both direct and indirect performance measures are appropriate. Some performance measures provide direct measures of safety. Examples include incident rates, volume of spills/releases, decrease in corrosion defects over time, and level of cathodic protection. Other performance measures provide indirect measures from which safety can be inferred. Examples include changes in pipeline mass balance (indicating undetected product loss), right-of-way surveillance (indicating unauthorized activity that might lead to increased third-party damage events), customer satisfaction surveys (indicating declining reliability of service), etc.

Program-Wide Performance Measures

Program-wide measures consist of information that each operator entering the Risk Management Demonstration Program would agree to provide, regardless of the scope of the proposed demonstration project. Program-wide performance measures are intended to provide aggregate representation of all participants in the Risk Management Demonstration Program measured against the risk management objectives. These measures would be common to all participants, supplemented by measures through the periodic surveying of regulators, operators, and other stakeholders.

Program-wide measures address:

- *Safety, Environmental Protection, and Service Reliability* - Does risk management result in greater safety, environmental protection, and service reliability than would otherwise be achieved through compliance with the safety regulations?
- *Resource Effectiveness* - Are resources being better prioritized and more effectively applied under risk management?
- *Communication and Partnership* - Has the agency and industry's involvement in the discussion of risks and risk control options, and their ability to affect desired outcomes, increased under risk management?

Feedback and Modifications to the Risk Management Program

An operator's performance monitoring process should establish criteria indicating when adjustments to risk-control decisions within the risk management program should be made or adjustments to the risk management program itself are required. The criteria should indicate whether regulator notification and/or approval would be required. These criteria might include percentage deviation from the expected outcome, data quality, time frame, and the effect of not making the adjustments (e.g., would the problem self-correct?). The risk management program also should define the range of expected adjustments. Where possible, to avoid bias, these criteria will be established before a performance variance or deficiency is encountered.

Communication — A Two-Way Process

By Molly McAnally

Northwest Pipeline Corporation

How many times have you participated in a communication training and been reminded that there are two primary parts to successful communication? I cannot remember one course that has not emphasized the “two-way” process of speaking and listening. So often when pipeline operators develop communications plans, we focus too much on providing information to others. We forget that, even in the process of public education, we need to create an environment in which we can receive information, feedback, or input. In that sense, listen, as well as speak to our communities and stakeholders.

It is simple oversight, never really intentional. We are trained and required to regularly tell others about our systems, emergency response capabilities, and products we transport. But, how often do we create the opportunity for others to tell us, as pipeline operators, something? What processes have we set up to allow people to contact us about issues?

As we evaluate the effectiveness of our practices during the Risk Management Demonstration Program, meaningful communication is one of the areas that deserves some attention. This is another opportunity for us to evaluate the effectiveness of our existing commu-

nications efforts; to enhance the relationships between the parties attempting to create, maintain or improve a dialogue; and to assure that methods are in place to receive comments from stakeholders.

At Northwest Pipeline Corporation (Northwest), we use many methods to communicate with landowners, tenants, customers, the public, agencies, and emergency response personnel. The purpose for the communications may differ, but the goal is always the same—to create a common understanding of the activities associated with the safe and reliable operations of interstate pipelines and to define the roles and responsibilities of the parties involved in protecting the pipeline facilities.

Wait a minute. Did she just say “the parties involved in the protection . . . ?” I thought that was the pipeline companies’ job. What does she mean by “parties?”

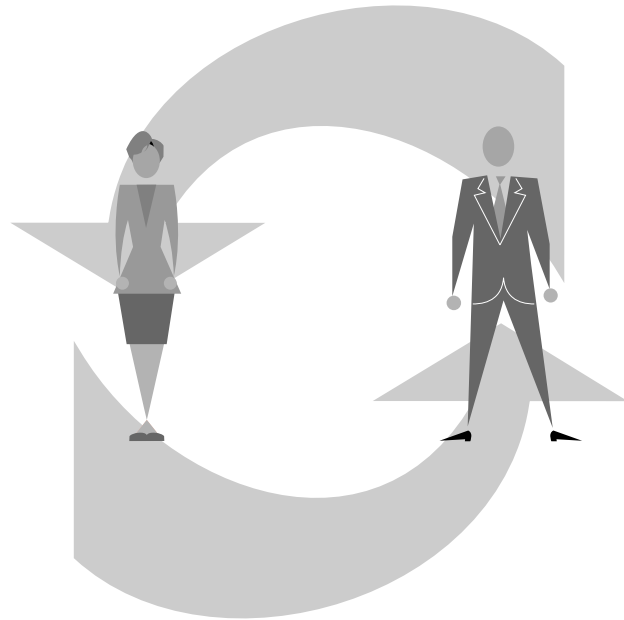
The protection of the interstate pipeline systems is a partnership among many groups. I have heard Mike Neuhard, Fairfax County

Virginia Fire and Rescue Battalion Chief say, on many occasions, that “pipeline safety is everyone’s responsibility—it doesn’t just belong to the pipeline operator.”

I couldn’t agree more with Mike on this issue. The ultimate responsibility falls on pipeline operators to operate and maintain their facilities in a prudent manner that protects the public and environment from harm. However, because it is such a large and varied task, to be truly successful you need to use partnerships with many groups to achieve the highest levels of safety.

Pipeline operators communicate with their stakeholders for many reasons, including:

- Damage prevention;
- Emergency response coordination;
- Public education permit applications;
- Project coordination;
- Customer coordination; and
- Media communication.



Communication — A Two-Way Process (continued)

The following are methods that the pipeline industry and, in particular, Northwest use to communicate with stakeholders.

Damage Prevention

Operators belong to “utility notification centers” or one-call systems, where available. In addition, they do excavator and landowner mailings; conduct excavator meetings; mark their facilities with permanent and temporary markings; advertise in publications; air public service announcements; and meet with local planning and permitting offices and landowners. All of these communications employ the best possible methods to protect the pipeline from damage due to outside forces from mechanical equipment, which is the leading cause of pipeline failure nationwide.

Emergency Response Coordination

Operators prepare mailings, manuals, calendars, and other materials for the emergency response officials with whom they meet regularly in person. The purpose of these meetings is to plan for an emergency situation that might arise, requiring coordination among the many agencies that could respond to a pipeline emergency. Meetings and one-on-one contacts are used to educate these officials about the pipeline products, facilities, locations, and the emergency response capabilities that must be coordinated if a response is required as a result of a pipeline incident. Joint training, mock emergencies, and other planning methods are used to

strengthen the key relationships between the emergency response community and the pipeline industry.

Public Education

Pipeline operators use various activities to educate the public about the products transported in the pipeline, how to recognize and report something that indicates a potential hazard or possible damage that has occurred, and the location of pipeline facilities and the methods used to mark them. Presentations at schools, agencies, businesses, service organizations, technical conferences, public meetings, and other gatherings are part of an annual public education program to increase awareness of pipeline facilities in communities and how the two can safely coexist when the proper precautions are taken by the operator and community.

Permit Applications

Pipeline operators apply for permits for various construction and maintenance activities. They use the permitting process to publicize their intended activities in the *Federal Register* and prepare other publication notices to inform the public of activities taking place in their communities.

Project Coordination

Pipeline operators contact specific parties, landowners, and agencies regarding proposed projects that may affect the environment, the right-of-way, or property belonging to a landowner before projects begin.

Operators use public meetings, letters, door-to-door campaigns and other communication techniques required by regulatory agencies.

Customer Coordination

Operators meet regularly with their customers to coordinate maintenance schedules; plan for additional facilities; coordinate anticipated demand and supply issues; and respond to concerns about shut-downs, reliability and service impacts that have already or could be experienced.

Media Communication

The media is commonly used to communicate information to the public and is especially valuable for communication of timely and accurate information about events in the event of an incident. Operators provide information as rapidly as possible to the media for public distribution via radio, television and publications.

New Technologies for Communication

Recent advancements in technologies that are widely accessible to the general public have expanded the methods available to companies for their communication efforts.

The Internet offers a major opportunity for pipeline companies to expand the audience that receives the information they distribute. Not only is it timely and accurate, the Internet also allows better and more accessible two-way communication. Internet home pages and e-mail are

Communication — A Two-Way Process (continued)

simple tools that interested parties can use to obtain information and respond to subjects related to pipeline safety.

New methods of interactive video-conferencing and broadcasts of electronic town meetings are being used with great success. Making the information readily available, easily accessible, and in as many formats as practical has already enhanced the effectiveness of pipeline industry and regulatory agency communications efforts.

Partnership Approach

But what about the partnership approach we mentioned earlier in this article? How do you fit into this process? The two-way process is not complete without the participation of all parties. Without the response, input, feedback, suggestions, support, cooperation, participation, and experience of all of the stakeholders, the pipeline faces threats to its safety. Through the combined energy and experience of the communities, excavators, emergency responders, developers, landowners, and public working as partners to achieve superior safety, reliability, and environmental protection, pipeline safety becomes everyone's responsibility.

Northwest Pipeline's commitment to risk management is to perform the most effective activities for reducing threats to the safety of the pipeline facilities. By protecting the pipeline facilities, we will be protecting the public and the environment. We are asking you to join us in these

efforts as our partners in this process.

Contact us with your comments, respond to our invitations, and participate in training, seminars and events on the subject of pipeline safety. If the proposed events do not meet your needs, please let the Office of Pipeline Safety or us know what serves the best interests of the communities and organizations you represent. Pipeline companies have listened to the concerns of the public and attempted to balance diverse requirements for optimal results. But we have never focused this strongly on soliciting your ideas and suggestions to enhance safety by using a partnership approach to achieve common goals.

When conflict develops in any situation, it can usually be traced back to a breakdown in communications. We wish to open new channels of communication and/or improve on the existing communications framework. In doing so, we hope to build strong, effective relationships and partnerships based upon mutual respect and understanding, develop common goals, and work toward solutions that best address the many facets of safe, reliable pipeline operations in harmony with the environment.



Creating a National Pipeline Mapping System

On May 22, 1997, the Joint Government-Industry Pipeline Mapping Quality Action Team (MQAT II) held a public meeting to discuss the development of the National Pipeline Mapping System (NPMS) initiative in Houston, Texas. Participants were provided information on the draft national pipeline mapping standards, on what data will be requested of the pipeline industry and on the preliminary results of the pilot tests. The Team also distributed information on ways the pipeline industry can convert cost effectively from paper to digital maps. The materials provided information on available tools to help industry convert to digital maps and specifically addressed tools that will help them meet the pipeline mapping data standards.

Included in the national pipeline mapping standards that will be used to create the digital pipeline layer are instructions for electronic data, paper map, and metadata (data on the data) submissions. Standards have also been drafted for use by the NPMS repository in collecting the pipeline information. The Team is

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National Pipeline Mapping System *(continued)*

currently pilot testing these standards and is establishing relationships with state agencies, industry, and others involved in the data exchange.

The Office of Pipeline Safety (OPS) has been working with other federal and state agencies and the pipeline industry for the past few years in developing the NPMS. When complete, the system will show the location and selected attributes of the major natural gas and hazardous liquid pipelines, and liquefied natural gas facilities operating in the United States.

In addition to providing pipeline locations, OPS will add data layers into the system to reveal population

density, unusually sensitive areas, possible natural disaster and high consequence areas, hydrography, and transportation networks. OPS will use the system to depict pipelines in relation to people, environment areas, water sources, and transportation. This will provide government agencies and industry with a common reference from which to make decisions concerning pipeline operations, maintenance practices, new construction, expansion, etc. In addition, this information will assist government and industry with emergency and environmental response activities.

The Mapping Team is sponsored by OPS, the American Petroleum

Institute, the American Gas Association, and the Interstate Natural Gas Association of America. The U.S. Geological Survey, the Department of Energy, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, the Department of Transportation's Bureau of Transportation Statistics, four state government agencies, and the natural gas and hazardous liquid pipeline industries also are represented on the team.

States and mapping vendors will have an opportunity to bid on pilot projects this summer. For additional information about the National Pipeline Mapping System, please contact Christina Sames at (202) 366-4561 or Steve Fischer at (202) 366-6267.

Risk Management Communication Plan Workshop Held in Washington, DC

The Office of Pipeline Safety (OPS) held the first Communications Workgroup meeting with representatives from public, state, local, and industry interest groups on April 30, 1997. The workgroup exchanged ideas on methods to communicate with the public about the Risk Management Demonstration Program. In particular, the group suggested strategies to promote

effective communications between demonstration program participants, and with state and local officials, public and private interests, and with the public living near a specific risk management demonstration project.

Representatives from the National League of Cities, Local Emergency Planning Committees, Environmental

Defense Fund, Fairfax County Virginia Fire Department, Interstate Natural Gas Association of America, American Petroleum Institute, Shell Oil Products Company, and Northwest Pipeline attended. Other organizations participating include the National Association of Towns and Townships, National Fire Protection Association, International Association of Fire Chiefs, Port of



Risk Management Communication Plan Workshop (continued)

Houston Authority, the International City/County Management Association, Gas Research Institute, New Hampshire Public Utilities Commission, Arizona Corporation Commission, National Transportation Safety Board, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

This group will continue to help guide OPS' communication initiatives by providing expert advice and by exchanging past experiences in dealing with public interests. The group will define the use of and develop messages for distribution via the Internet, local or regional briefings, publications, or other types of media on specific demonstration projects.

A draft Communications Plan was discussed during the meeting. Comments are being received and incorporated. OPS plans to publish the Communications Plan in the *Federal Register* within the next several weeks.

A second meeting was held via conference call on June 20, 1997. Several major points were discussed and issues agreed upon to move forward on publishing the Communications Plan and to proceed with future electronic town meetings. In addition, the group discussed the use of the new Pipeline Risk Management Information System (PRIMIS—see related article) to distribute public information; the assistance available from Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) members to disseminate information and to provide feedback on environmental and emergency planning issues; and the identification of local cable contacts and programming options for future electronic meeting broadcasts.

The next conference call will be held on July 24th. For additional information contact Eben Wyman at (202) 366-0918 or Cheryl Whetsel at (202) 366-4431.

Regulatory Rulemaking on Operator Qualifications

The Office of Pipeline Safety's (OPS's) Operator Qualifications Regulatory Rulemaking Advisory Committee currently developing a proposed rule on qualifications of individuals performing safety-sensitive operations and maintenance functions on pipelines subject to the gas and hazardous liquid pipeline safety regulations met on July 9-10, 1997. This committee is made up of persons who represent interests that would be affected by the rule, such as gas pipeline operators, hazardous liquid and carbon dioxide pipeline operators, representatives of state and federal governments, and other interested parties.

OPS believes that the negotiated rulemaking process will provide ample opportunity for all affected parties to present their views and to reach a consensus on a pipeline personnel qualifications rule. The process continues with future meetings scheduled for August 27-28 at the American Gas Association headquarters in Arlington, VA, and for October 8-9 at the DOT Nassif Building in Washington, D.C. Contact: Eben Wyman at (202) 366-0918.

Credits

Pipeline Risk Management is published once each quarter by the Joint Risk Assessment Quality Team (JRAQT). The goal of this newsletter is to communicate information to our sponsors and stakeholders on the activities of JRAQT and related risk management activities within OPS and the pipeline industry.

If you have article ideas, contact the newsletter editor:

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Of Interest...

The Texas Legislature passed a new one-call/damage prevention bill. The bill, history, and other information can be viewed on the Internet at <http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/tlo/billnbr.htm> — Enter *HB2295* and click *Bill Text*. Then click on *Enrolled Version Text*.