

**Speech as Written for Delivery By
VADM Thomas J. Barrett, USCG (ret.)
Administrator
Pipeline & Hazardous Materials Safety Administration
U.S. Department Of Transportation**

**Texas State HMEP Grant Announcement
Galena Park Fire Department
@ 10:30 a.m.
Friday, October 20, 2006**

Thank you Assistant Fire Chief Squyers for that very kind introduction and for hosting our grant announcement today.

I would also like to thank

- Congressman Gene Green,
- Jack Whitley of the Governor's Division of Emergency Management,
- City Administrator John Cooper,
- Bob Royall, Chief of Emergency Management Services, Harris County,
- David Wade, Chief of Training, Emergency Management Services, Harris County, and
- Members of the Greater Houston Local Emergency Planning Committee, for participating in our event.

I am here today because Congressman Green told me about the outstanding first responder team you have here in Galena Park. He has high praise for the fire fighters and other first responders who work closely with the Harris County Fire Marshal.

You and your fellow fire fighters are the unsung heroes who ensure the safety of local Texas citizens in responding to incidents involving hazardous materials.

So, on behalf of the Bush Administration, and Transportation Secretary Mary Peters, I'd like to tell you that we greatly appreciate the dedication of the first responder community for risking your lives every day.

I am also here today to announce a DOT Hazardous Materials Emergency Preparedness Grant to the State of Texas in the amount of \$668,460 dollars. This grant will fund

hazardous materials emergency preparedness planning and training activities for first responders at the state, county and local level.

I've learned from the Texas HMEP Grantee that last year, three Local Emergency Preparedness Committees in the greater Houston metropolitan area received some \$49,000 in HMEP grant funding. This HMEP grant funding was used to:

- run a three-city cooperative hazardous materials exercise,
- increase public outreach and awareness of hazardous materials, and
- conduct commodity flow studies to determine which hazardous materials are transiting the region.

This is exactly what the HMEP Grants Program was established to do..., to improve the safety and security of our communities by providing funding for hazmat training and preparedness.

Thank you, Congressman Green, for your strong leadership in Congress to ensure that this Program is fully funded and available to our first responders.

The safe and secure transportation of hazardous materials is a big job, and the Federal government can't do it alone. We rely heavily on the trained and fearless group of professional fire fighters, police, and other first responders found in local volunteer fire departments, like the one here in Irwin.

Our hope is that the funds we provide to Texas continues to flow down to the county and local community emergency preparedness units that need the hazmat training and planning the most.

Together with the help of your representatives in Congress, and the brave men and women on the front lines of emergency response, we can advance the safety and security of our transportation systems.

Now I would like to offer the floor to Congressman Green.

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