



RRT VI SEMI - ANNUAL MEETING
10 - 11 January, 2006
NEW ORLEANS, LA

The meeting was opened by RRT 6 Co-Chairs, Captain Ronald Branch, D8, USCG, and Mr. Ragan Broyles, Region 6, USEPA. Attendees introduced themselves.

Attendees: (See Listing)

STATE OF OKLAHOMA

Mr. Tom Bergman, Oklahoma, Department of Environmental Quality, had nothing to report to the RRT. Mr. Dale Magnum, primary RRT member, is undergoing heart surgery, and would have a lot of information to share with the RRT. One major issue is Oklahoma has had a large number of wild fires and evacuees. Hundreds of evacuees are remaining, but none of them remain on the Emergency Management support system. Those wildfires, mostly in rural districts, caused little structural damage, and no hazmat issues from them. The real issues concerning the Dept of Environmental Quality generating from the wild fires have been air quality, and land protection.

STATE OF NEW MEXICO

Ms. Susan Eastman, New Mexico, Office of Emergency Management, represented Mr. Don Shannon, recently promoted to the Risk Manager, for the department. Until a new RRT primary member can be found, Susan Walker is main contact. NM is in charge of the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) operation this year in terms of National Coordination Group (NCG). States can now help each other on issues of liability and compensation. There is a new chairperson each year for the NCG. New Mexico took over the chairmanship September 1, 2005. During Katrina, there were over 700 missions within Louisiana and Mississippi, with the involvement of over 65,000 personnel, at cost of over \$600M, including National Guard in support of Katrina. During the last legislative session, New Mexico consolidated all emergency response powers under one legislative act. HAZMAT still has its own legislative statute. During Hurricane Katrina, 1100 evacuees found their way to our state, that's traumatic for small desert state to take care of evacuees and coordinate with FEMA and the Region 6.

Mr. Dennis Pepe, New Mexico, Environment Department. Provided an overview of the State of New Mexico; 5th largest state, 36th in population. The top four environmental hazards are wildfire, flash flood, drought, and hazmat incidents thru transportation incident. In 2005, there were 96 hazmat incidents, increase from 2004, 85; 2003 121. Major hazards are Hydrogen, ethanol, sodium. The Environmental Department is renewing the agreement with the Department of Energy for environmental oversight and monitoring and we will be adding

emergency management. We are beginning a 3-year coordinated exercise, including Los Alamos lab, counties, federal, states, and pueblos around the lab. On 9-12 August, 2005, the 9th annual Hazmat challenge will start. 11 teams competed in Hazmat events (off-loading a hazmat truck). Fire Department, Farmington, NM won 1st place; Midwest City, OK, 2nd. During Hurricane Katrina, the EMAC staffed an environment health strike team to provide (food safety & drinking water activities) awareness training. As a result, environmental assessment task force was being developed, standing by ready to go in during the recovery phase. Funding was provided to develop two 12 person teams (one in Santa Fe, one in Los Cruces). Our agency is very active on border between New Mexico and the Mexican, particularly in Border 2012 programs. I am the United States co-leader with the New Mexico Emergency Response Task Force working with Mexico in Juarez and Chihuahua. My office is just starting to make progress concerning the border programs. We have an EPA grant looking at Emergency Response capabilities along the Mexico border, focusing on HAZMAT response. We are looking toward standardization for training with border towns and exploring joint HAZMAT training facility at Sunland Park, New Mexico.

STATE OF TEXAS

Jeff Lewellen, TCEQ, Team Leader, Emergency Response Strike Team. We were very busy like everyone else and were ordered to assist Louisiana during the first three weeks of Hurricane Katrina on an EMAC. We were called back to Texas after our initial response for some R&R, and later responded to Hurricane Rita. Currently the strike team that I lead is in north Texas at the HQ for land base wild fires, we've deployed a mobile command post, satellite communications, and supporting the Florida Gold IMT. There are thousands of people in Texas fighting fires, bringing them under control quickly. The strike team is standing by to respond to any Hazmat incident caused by the wild fires. I am looking forward to working with John Temporelli (Garner) & EPA on chemical countermeasures issues that we talked about at the last meeting. The countermeasure issues will affect our agency significantly if we stop using chemical countermeasures on the side of the road in Houston, TX.

Greg Pollack, Deputy Commissioner, Texas General Land Office. We were actively engaged in Hurricane Katrina relief and Hurricane Rita response efforts. On the way in to this meeting, we toured the Gentilly (Elysian Fields) neighborhood, where we did search & rescue in September, 2005. The digital pictures I saw back home didn't do the devastation area any justice. Hurricane Rita had direct impact in our operations (Port Arthur) in South East Texas, rendering our office uninhabitable for 30 days. We were working out of CAPT Richey's back parking lot. We are back in our old building. Our bilge facility in Sabine Pass was destroyed, no plans to rebuild at the present time, not much left in Sabine Pass, shrimp fleets who were our main user has been scattered. We have been supporting CAPT Richey on KCITB Barge spill response. At the last RRT 6 meeting, I mentioned that the State of Texas legislature gave TGLO some authority to remove abandoned and submerged vessels. We have finally removed one vessel in Aransas County in September, 2005. We will be working with Coast Guard and hopefully EPA to remove 1 vessel, in particular, in Dickinson bayou area of Galveston, County. The State level gave us the removal authority, with no appropriations. We will endeavor to find federal money to remove this vessel. Robin Jamail, TGLO, who runs our R&D program, is now working

primarily out of NOAA, in Silver Springs, Maryland in coordinated efforts for Integrated Ocean Observation system. Robin is working about 80% of her time working in Silver Spring, MD.

John Rissler, Texas Railroad Commission. We regulate the state's oil/gas industry, production, exploration and pipelines that distribute oil, natural gas, well as propane. We have about 160 field inspectors throughout the state. The legislature this year mandated our regulatory group over railroads will go to Texas Department of Transportation, we are still RR Commission, but have nothing to do with railroads. In 05, we responded to 26 well blowouts in the oil and gas industry. We responded to 424 routine on shore oil spills. We have a group called site remediation, which cleaned up 292 abandoned facility sites to the tune of 3.4 million dollars. We also provided response support during hurricane Katrina/Rita.

DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR

Steve Spencer, DOI, New Mexico. The summer started with Tropical Storm Arlene, creating a 12-15 bbls oil spill. This spill caused by TS Arlene, washed over Breton Island where thousands of brown pelicans were nesting. 1,000 juvenile brown pelican were oiled. You will hear more about this spill tomorrow in a presentation given by the Breton Island Wildlife Refuge manager. We thought Hurricane Dennis would have an impact on the surviving brown pelicans but didn't impact the birds at all. The Department of Interior is involved in almost every emergency support function under the National Response Plan. At peak, 2304 people were working under various emergency support functions (ESF) under National Response Plan. Public safety, mutual aid to surrounding communities, restoration of bureau capabilities, significant impact in parks, refuges, outer continental shelf oil & gas production infrastructure; ESF 3, public works and reclamation, we still have 300 people working thru the Bureau of Reclamation. ESF 4, firefighting, national interagency fire center, park service, fish and wildlife, at one time we had 1248 people deployed setting up mobilization centers, base camps, aid, staging mobile homes; ESF 10, we would like to thank Coast Guard for their outstanding support and trust, as well as funding CG signed off on. At one time, we had 44 staff members from fish and wildlife, park service and Minerals Management Services. I even had people from Alaska and California shipped in for support. ESF 11, I am the initial federal person in region 6, supporting natural & cultural resources and historic properties. We provide assist to FEMA, primarily the environmental group which deployed in Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama. DOI received about \$1M in mission assignments from FEMA and deployed 49 personnel prehistoric property evaluations. In New Orleans, many of buildings that are historic structures will need to be demolished. We went to Congress requesting supplemental appropriations, so many facilities damaged, probably need \$50 million just to make buildings habitable and usable. DOI attorneys believe CERCLA funding might be appropriate since hazmat didn't originate on our refuge, they were washed in.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Matt Orwig, U.S. Attorney, for Eastern District (Beaumont) of Texas provided an overview of the U.S. Attorney's Office. There are 94 U.S. attorneys in the country. They are appointed by President and confirmed by Senate. We are staffed with talented lawyers, non-lawyers and your chief law enforcement office in the district. We are your hired help, here to assist you any way we can. In the past, we worked on criminal and civil cases with EPA, USCG. We've worked on environmental and terrorism issues for FEMA. During Hurricane Rita, we filled the Public Information role, addressing media, legal issues, evacuation, congressional liaison, political issues. I encourage RRT 6 to use our office as a resource.

U.S. COAST GUARD (D8)

CDR Nathalie Valley, RRT 6 (Alternate Co-chair). The majority of Coast Guard (D8) staff evacuated to St Louis for Hurricane Katrina, but we still kept a strong Coast Guard presence in the New Orleans/Baton Rouge area. One of the measures required of the USCG is staffing of joint field offices in the surrounding parishes. This includes Austin, Texas, Baton Rouge, LA, Jackson, MS, and Montgomery, AL., but additional search staffing for CG units impacted by the hurricane.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY (FEMA)

Lori LaFon, FEMA, I am representing Mr. Bob Hendrix who has accepted a new position as Executive Assistant to the Regional Director. FEMA has been actively involved in hurricanes along the Gulf Coast and wildfires in Texas and Oklahoma. Hurricane Katrina, to say catastrophic is an understatement, we all learned from it. We are looking to rework parts of the Stafford Act, to include which agencies have authority of their own, and to determining if agencies have funding strings attached to those authorities. Beyond the disasters, we have a Pine Bluff Arsenal exercise in February, 2006. During FEMA's reorganizing, several major programs have moved from FEMA over to preparedness directorate under DHS.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Charlie Henry, NOAA. The NOAA Corp makes up approximately 70 percent of the Department of Commerce. The agency has been very busy as were all other agencies during Hurricane Katrina/Rita, plus responding to all other incidences within the District. NOAA received a lot of attention; weather forecasting and scientific support to other federal agencies. We provided air support, disaster photos, damage assessment and many other scientific support tasking. My side of NOAA, response and restoration, participated pretty heavily by providing damage assessment photographs, to family's right after the disaster. Jim Morris, retired, who sat in this RRT for many years was voluntarily recalled. Jim worked on the salvage side of this disaster.

STATE OF LOUISIANA

Roland Guidry, Oil Spill Coordinator, Office of the Governor. Hurricanes Katrina/Rita was the perfect NRT/RRT response exercise, which stretched all of us to the limit. The State would like to thank all agencies and volunteers from across the country for their help and support. The first few days were primarily rescue efforts. The response phase followed with assistance from the Coast Guard, OSRO's, and other federal and state agencies. The biggest problems were communications and logistics, we could not get anywhere. During the hurricane, my office was faced with six major, 3 medium, and 131 minor events. Approximately, 8.7million gallons of product were reportedly spilled, with some 3.9 million gallons recovered. We calculated that about 4 million gallons were naturally dispersed. We are continuing reconnaissance over flights; photos of Murphy oil spill, Bass facilitate, (90% complete) 2 above ground storage tanks, (340 feet by 26') were thrown by the tidal surge. I want to thanks all of the COTP in the States of Louisiana and Texas for taking care of us during the post hurricane efforts.

Karen Price, LADEQ, Alternate for Jeff Myers. I just want to thank all the entities that came in to the state to assist us during the post hurricane operations. A year prior to hurricane Katrina, the state had an exercise/drill called Hurricane Pam, learned a lot, didn't have time to put all the prevention aspects into place, but the drill was helpful on response side of the house. We conducted this exercise to assist in writing a response. The hurricane Pam exercise was designed to be the big one, however, hurricane Katrina exceeded all that was planned. During the exercise, we did not plan for levee breaches or mass evacuations.

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Luis Villanueva, OSHA. I would like to thank everyone for what they do. Hurricane Katrina/Rita was our first hurricane response. It was a learning experience for all of us. When working with the RRT, we are not working in our normal enforcement mode (OSHA); we provide support to the primary lead agencies. During the fiscal year 2005, we initiated approximately 3000 personal samples of different field operations. We have also identified 4000 serious health hazards within our region. We have opened a field office here in New Orleans and pulled in people from across the United States to help out and to insure a safe work environment. We found out that communications and lodging were big issues in parts of Texas and Louisiana. Our people had to live in trailers or RV's. This learning experience will better prepare us in the future. I personally want to thank each and every one of you for a job well done.

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Robert Kahl, Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR). SPR as all other federal/state agencies participated in the hurricane response mode. We had several staff members locate to the Louisiana (Baton Rouge) and Texas (Austin) EOC's. Our New Orleans regional office relocated to Beaumont, TX. That move lasted about several weeks and then we moved to one of our sites outside Baton Rouge, LA. We were visited by Cabinet Secretaries to discuss fuel logistics which was worked out. SPR had draw downs from the reserve as well as several oil exchanges with several refineries that had their oil supplies cut off. During the recovery phase, an internal after action report was conducted with one action item surfacing. SPR does not know if the RRT is the proper federal body to bring the action item too.

ACTION ITEM:

The RESF talks extensively about the Electrical Distribution System but not enough discussion concerning refining capacity of the oil and gas industry. Hurricane Katrina showed us how fuel shortages that is localized and can spread to a regional problem that can drive the economy to a halt if you don't have the energy. This action item needs to be addressed on the national level.

CAPT Ron Branch introduced Dr. Joe Laforanara, Executive Director, National Response Team, NRT, to the RRT 6 membership. Dr. Laforanara thanked the RRT for the invitation to attend the RRT 6 meeting, which was held in New Orleans, LA. New Orleans (Hilton River Walk) will also be the site for the NRT meeting which will be held in March, 2006. Dr. Laforanara thanked about the overall support that was given during post- Hurricane Katrina/Rita, by all of the 17 agencies that makeup the NRT. The NRT is putting together a national list of "Lessons Learned". He is hoping to hear about and discuss local/regional lessons learned.

CLOSING REMARKS:

Mr. Steve Mason will post all presentations on the EPA OSC Website.

The next RRT 6 meeting will be held in San Antonio, TX. Steve Mason will provide the agenda, location and dates.

LIST OF ATTENDEES:

Jeff Lewellin, TCEQ
Sheri Lin Thomas, TRP CORP.
Karen Price, LADEQ
LCDR Shannon Gilreath, USCG
James Calhoun, Bisso Marine
Carole Curient, MMS
Joe Laforanara, USEPA-NRT
Reed Green, USCG
CAPT Jake Korn, USCG
Lorie LaFon, FEMA
John Rissler, TXRRC
Darice Breeding, MMS
Kerry Stephen, Airborne Support
CDR Ed Parsons, USCG
Diane Beeman, FWS
Angie Mills, EPA/START
Jim Morris, NOAA
LTjg Sara Geoffrion, USCG
CAPT Sharon Richey, USCG
Susan Eastman, NMOEM
Chris Woodle, USCG
CDR Greg Stump, USCG
Dan Ryan, LSU
LT Aaron Demo, USCG
David Moore, MMS
Albert Bond, DOI
Margaret Metcalf, MMS
Rusty Wright, MMS
Harry Rich, MSRC/CGA
James Harris, USFWS
Alton Bates, MMS

CAPT Richard Kaser, USCG
Robert Simmons, ES2
Matt Orwig, DOJ
Dana Bahar, NMED
Charlie Henry, DOC-NOAA
Bonnie Shaner, USCG
CAPT Frank Paskewich, USCG
Tim Holmes, USCG
Tom Bergman, ODEQ
Joey Moore, LOSCO
Bill Robberson, USEPA
Howard Barker, Airborne Support
Brad Wallace, DOE
Gina Saizan, LOSCO
Jane Powers, MMS
CDR Nathalie Valley, USCG
Cassandra Aramburu, USCG
Luis Villanueva, DOL-OSHA
Dennis Pepe, NMED
Steve Spencer, DOI
A.J. Heikamp, MSRC
Stacey Crecy, USCG
John Martin, USCG
Roland Guidry, LOSCO
Greg Pollock, TGLO
Karolien Debusschere, LOSCO
John Dunn, ExxonMobil
Shaw Thompson, Oil Mop,LLC
Ragan Broyles, USEPA
John Temperilli, Garner/CTAC