

## **Summary of NIEHS WETP 2007 Fall Conference: The Future of Hazardous Materials Cleanup & Training Chapel Hill, NC**

**Thursday, October 18, 2007**

**9:00 a.m.**

### Welcome

Joseph “Chip” Hughes, *Director, NIEHS*

- Tribute to Brian Christopher and Sandy Tillett

**9:15 a.m.**

### Meeting and Strategic Plan Overview

Joseph “Chip” Hughes, *Director, NIEHS*

- One year ago WETP met with the Clearinghouse to reexamine the strategic plan, to assess accomplishments and identify future challenges
- WETP would like to examine the community infrastructure that underlies the program and utilize those contacts
- Current strategies include partnerships between NIEHS WETP and other organizations, organizational alignment of WETP within a larger sphere of influence, leadership and training and maintaining the human capital, and sharing information among stakeholder groups
- Strategic Concerns for WETP include broadening the mission statement, operational questions for trainers, with whom and how to make partnerships, and workshops and conferences

Tom McQuiston, *USW Tony Mazzocchi Center*

- Provided a summary of the Clearinghouse Advisory Committee’s discussion of the Strategic Plan
- Issue of concern – has the program focused its limited resources too narrowly?
- How to increase the dialogue and build bridges to other groups?
- How to respond to needs and build partnerships between federal, state, local organizations?
- Transition from current leaders to leaders of the future?
- Training needs and resources for immigrant workers

Donald Elisburg, *National Clearinghouse*

- Provided a report from the Champions meeting
- In order to grow, the program needs to put numbers together with future programs
- There is work out there in hazardous waste, remediation
- Need to show agencies why the program has value
- Need to look at other groups that need training for “everyday” emergencies (i.e. spill at school)

- Need to build on 20 years of experiences

### **10:20 a.m.**

#### What are the Training Markets?

Pete Stafford, *Center to Protect Workers' Rights, Moderator*

- Discussed what awardees see as their training market, who they are currently training and how and if they expect that to change in the next five years
- Discussed the changing demographics in construction; Latino workers are now 23 percent of the construction workforce
- Global warming is driving green construction where one looks at energy consumed during the building process

Mark Catlin, *SEIU*

- Hospital workers have a need for training – large facilities
- Over the next 5 years – health care training will grow
- There are many opportunities for HAZWOPER training
- Health care profession will expand dramatically

Doug Feil, *Kirkwood Community College*

- 40 hour numbers were up, refresher numbers stayed the same
- 40 hour courses are becoming the standard course
- Took a poll of the audience – over the past year most have seen an increase in 40 hour numbers, ½ and ½ with increase and same for refresher numbers
- Poll – most are performing multi-language training
- Issues with providing training for older vs. younger workers – blended training with computer and hands-on learning

### **11:20 a.m.**

#### IAFF Strategic Program Evaluation

Patrick Morrison, *Assistant to the General President, IAFF*

- Retired firefighter of 21 years
- Save time and money by working with industry to get training packages – don't have to "reinvent the wheel"

Bruce Lippy, *The Lippy Group*

- Evaluation process involved interviews and reviewing data
- Looked at projected versus actual training
- Training at host facility - don't rely on host organization to promote the class
- Provided student demographics, education, courses
- Provided a list of program strengths and weakness
- Must consider if the evaluation tool is current and appropriate for program content

## Questions

- Is there a near-miss qualification for VPP status?
  - Yes
- What are the options with looking at trends over time (i.e. age, gender, race, ethnicity, language)?
  - IAFF collects data and sends out via email (near miss reporting)

## 1:00 p.m.

### Lunch Speaker

Les Leopold, Author, *The Man Who Hated Work but Loved Labor The Life and Times of Tony Mazzocchi*

- Provided a detailed description of a few stories from the life of Tony Mazzocchi
- Displayed a video with Tony Mazzocchi

## 1:30 p.m.

### The Evolution of the Brownfields/Minority Worker Training Programs and the Associated Cleanup Markets

Sharon D. Beard, *NIEHS, Moderator*

- Session covered salient and emerging training issues to help transform the Brownfields and Minority Worker Training Program from a pilot program to a stand alone program

Doris Gill, *City of Port Arthur*

- Provided job training experiences in Port Arthur, TX from the local level
- Collaboration was key to success amongst all interested parties
- Construction training involved hands on and OSHA 10 hour course
- Saw an increase in female participants
- Placement levels were at 90% and 65%

Steve Fenton, *CCCHST/Kirkwood Community College*

- Provided an overview of emerging environmental green careers
- Career Voyages, O\*Net good web sites to compare jobs
- Job areas in “Green Buildings” are growing - environmental sector is seeing the fastest growing jobs

Gary Gustafson, *Laborers-AGC Education and Training Fund*

- Examined lessons learned from the Laborers-AGC Minority Outreach Program
- Provided a seven week training program for non-English speaking workers, occupational English training the last week
- Labor’s Apprenticeship program (accredited) graduates have college credit automatically
- 122 participants at 5 sites – 86 of those moved on to apprenticeship or company employment

## Questions

- To Doris - Who provided training for Port Arthur?
  - ISTC people for environmental training
  - Bechtel received the expansion grant
- To Steve - Statistics collected on Career Voyages, O\*Net is all collected by DOL – is it reliable?
  - Data is 2 years old, sometimes you need to drill down to get to the heart of the data
- To Gary - What does the extra week of training constitute?
  - Activity based learning exercises to learn vocational English words
  - Training is provided in English
- To Gary - How do they do testing?
  - Students must pass the training in Spanish or English

## 3:15 p.m.

### Concurrent Breakout Sessions

#### Breakout 1 – Examining Mission Priorities from the DOE Program Perspective

- Challenges
  - Contractors' safety and health staff
  - Invite contractors into your classes
  - Finding the holes that contractors can fill with WETP training
  - Contractors want to minimize workers' time away from work
- Corporate campaign?
- Podonsky leverage
- 851
- Near miss initiatives at WIPP
- OSHA training as blanket requirement
  - Vitrification plant requires OSHA 10 (OSHA or DOE jurisdiction?)
- Community partners – using DOE trainers to provide training in communities
- 3 grantees developing RDD curricula, use TOPOFF scenarios, USW, IUOE, ICWUC
- INEL – CBT is training there
- Inventory of issues at each site
- DOE VPP sites, by site, by contractor
- Recognizing the barriers in the strategic plan

#### Breakout 2 – Examining Mission Priorities from the HWWT Program Perspective

- The HWWT is WETP's core program; this is the best year of training WETP has ever had.
- Core has been HAZWOPER: 40 hour and refresher.
- HWWT spans from hazardous waste to hazardous materials. The program has stagnated. We've added mold, meth labs, and school science labs. Is this the direction we need to go? How does that affect us? Is it taking us away from core programs that we started out with?
- It used to take months to develop a new training course. Now it's an instantaneous demand for new training. We need it now. Awardees are able to cut and paste a lot of

stuff, but are we doing it right? Is it of high quality when we have to do it so fast?  
Courses tend to evolve and get better with time.

- Awardees need to share info! It is much easier to start with the curricula that someone has already created and tweak it to make it right. Have to weigh the cost of creating material (by request) for 8 people when you're not sure if you'll ever use it again.
- WETP wants to see a link from all training to HAZWOPER. Construction training isn't HAZWOPER but it's important. Same with meth labs, they're not a Superfund but they're necessary.
- WETP wants awardees to interpret training in broadest possible way.
- Sharon Beard has a list of reimbursable courses.
- WETP tries to respond to needs. WETP will try to find a way to respond to the need without breaking the tie back to HAZWOPER.
- Work with communities around sites – WETP has funded health and safety classes for those who live around the site. They didn't fund the cleanup, just the safety classes.
- We don't want to give the impression that we've done all that we can do in the HAZWOPER field. There's still more that needs to be done and more people that need to be trained. HAZWOPER is expanding, but there's more in the traditional area that still needs to be done. Our core mission – Superfund is still an issue, there are so many sites that still need to be taken care of. If we revitalize the Superfund issue and cleanup then we'll have more money available to delve deeper into this issue. So many sites that were once "disposal" sites are now cleanup sites.
- Landfills were once out in the country. Now with urban sprawl they're in the middle of town and there are all kinds of problems with items that were once buried in the ground. Now these neighborhoods are lethal.

### Schools

- We should consider training public sector employees, janitors/custodians in schools. A survey was done in Iowa that found there were 300,000 gallons of unidentified chemicals in high school labs. This would be a hazardous waste cleanup. Who is going to do it and who is going to pay for it? WETP Awardees would need to bring this up as a new area to fund.
- Decision makers at the schools need to recognize the hazard and work to get this cleaned up. Unless something is going to be done, it's safest to keep the cabinet closed for now.
- ICWUC has created cleanup guides for New York City schools. It's an awareness class for teachers. The lack of knowledge among teachers is frightening.
- The Iowa Department of Education did a hazard assessment of schools. All had some sort of an emergency plan; 90% did not include the hazards in their neighborhoods (pesticides traveling past the school each day; neighborhood contaminants; some schools are in the same area as anhydrous ammonia). Schools didn't have a clue to the local hazards.
- There's a huge disconnect between the lack of resources available to get schools to come out and participate in an awareness program and the need to get them out.

### The "small business challenge"

- The workplace is getting smaller. Small businesses are making it hard to pull people together to get the appropriate training done for people.

- It isn't cost effective to reach out to small businesses of 2-3 people. Working with a Chamber of Commerce is a great way to reach small businesses. This would allow us to reach important segments that we're currently not reaching.
- Forming partnerships with various small business groups? Small business employees have become a training population that's growing but is not on the radar screen. You need a training vehicle to get to the various businesses.
- Awardees should try partnering with the city Chamber of Commerce and the local fire department. This is one way to get new small business owners to participate and become aware of the regulations and dangers. It is a less intimidating for small businesses to come through the chamber. Start with a two hour awareness course – it would be an outreach tool to get small business folks to come back for more training.

What audiences are we missing?

- Port security workers are a new audience that we're going after.
- Meth labs are a new area that WETP is beginning to fund.
- While doing training for hospital first receivers they've identified those workers at urgent care centers need HAZWOPER training too. They've been overlooked.
- Anything that has the potential to turn into a hazardous waste site should be a focus.

### Breakout 3 – Examining Emerging Issues

Craig Slatin, *University of Massachusetts Lowell*

- Hazardous Waste & ER
  - Unknown organisms from biotechnology
- Emerging Technology Issues
  - New energy technologies
- Climate Disaster & Disaster Protection
  - Mold, chemicals, unplanned environmental event (wind and other destruction)
  - Work done to mediate effects of climate change (hazards associated with cleanup)
  - Technologies to slow carbon release, new hazards in industry
  - Plant shutdown processes and standard operating procedures (SOPs) need to change
- Green Chemistry
  - Promoting green chemistry with the idea that less waste means a less hazardous workplace
  - REACH will likely affect the US chemical production, either by regulation or trade
- Environmental Sensing and Response Technologies
  - Using satellites that sense UV, chemical content of air, health hazards long before you sense it
  - Robotics
- Hazards associated with new materials, recycled materials
  - Recycled and new materials used in construction
    - Nano-particles already in concrete
  - Dangerous material replaced by something better – creates different kinds of hazards
    - Example: pressure treated lumber (arsenic out, chromium increased)
- Community & Worker Coalitions for Environmental health – restrictions on TRI data, supporting partnerships

- What exploration of general principles for protection and prevention needed for curriculum
- Connecting these issues to minority and low-income communities?
  - Housing issues
- How do we link our worker Health + Safety?
  - SBRP Research
- Post Disaster abandonment of worker protection
  - Restricting regulation of hazards and compliance requirements
  - OSHA course already created – expand use of disaster site worker course
  - Use WETP to education and communicate issues to workers
  - Alliances between response and skilled support sectors
  - Build community awareness and a list of first responders
- Mutual aid compacts between WETP and municipalities, counties, states – make a model, set them up before the incident occurs
  - Find ways to work with other agencies (example: the Gulf Coast problems from Hurricane Katrina with waste cleanup) and set up agreements before the disaster occurs
  - Focus on partnerships between community organizations and unions
- International training and partnerships (Mexico, Canada)
- New Initiative on Military wastes sites/technology
  - SBRP
- Immigrant Worker Training as a concept, focus area
- Support programs across sectors and program emphasis to develop response needs in targeted national regions
- Issues related to long-term post disaster recovery
  - Health, safety, environmental issues
  - Training for community groups to provide voluntary disaster response
  - Credentialing of response personnel?
  - Status of ESAP?

Action Items:

- Start talking with people in the regions you would like to work with in order to develop a proposal for future funding
- Identify the minimum level of training needed in a disaster response
- Create list of questions from breakout session for future breakout session
- How to link our worker health and safety with SBRP research?