



Council Briefs

Newsletter of the Cook Inlet Regional Citizens Advisory Council

August 2008

“The mission of the Council is to represent the citizens of Cook Inlet in promoting environmentally safe marine transportation and oil facility operations in Cook Inlet”

Recertification

The Coast Guard announced the opening of the comment period for the annual Cook Inlet RCAC application for recertification. The announcement is posted in the Federal Register at: http://www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/fedreg/frcont08.html

Public comments on our application must reach the Seventeenth Coast Guard District by the date specified in the announcement. Cook Inlet RCAC and the Coast Guard encourage interested parties to submit written data, views, or arguments. Owners and operators of oil terminal facilities and crude oil tankers calling at terminal facilities, fishing, aquaculture, recreational and environmental citizens groups, are all requested to comment.

In 2001, the Coast Guard changed its policy on recertification procedures requiring applications to provide comprehensive information every three years. For the two years in between, applicants submit information describing substantive changes to the information provided at the previous triennial recertification. Cook Inlet RCAC goes through the yearly process to be certified as the “alternative advisory group” under the guidelines of the Oil Pollution Act of 1990.

AMOP/IOSC

Cook Inlet RCAC Director of Operations Vinnie Catalano and PROPS committee member Bob Flint attended the 31st annual Arctic and Marine Oil Spill Program (AMOP) Technical Seminar held in Calgary, Alberta. The technical conference often highlights new developments in oil spill response in cold climates.

During this year’s seminar, Mr. Catalano presented the Cook Inlet Ice Forecasting Network project during the Contingency Planning, Preparation, and Prevention segment of the conference. The CIRCAC-initiated program is a cooperative effort among RCAC, Cook Inlet Platform operators and on-shore facility operators to provide on-the-ground ice observations to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Ice Forecaster. Future improvements to the program include the addition of strategically placed digital video cameras that record and relay real-time ice conditions to the NOAA Ice Forecaster.

Mr. Catalano also attended, along with Cook Inlet RCAC Assistant Executive Director Karen Delany, Director of Public Outreach Trenten Dodson, Board Member Rob Lindsey, and PROPS Committee Member Ted Moore, the 2008 International Oil Spill Conference (IOSC) in Savannah, Georgia. The IOSC provides a forum for professionals from the international community, the private sector, government, and non-governmental organizations to highlight and discuss innovations and best practices across the spectrum of prevention, preparedness, response and restoration.

Cook Inlet RAC Annual Meeting Awards

Captain Mark DeVries, Commanding Officer of the Marine Safety Office (MSO) in Anchorage, retired from the U.S. Coast Guard on July 11, 2008, following a presentation of colors, inspection of troops, reading of the watch, and several other traditions. The Change of Command ceremony also welcomed Captain Mark Hamilton as the new Commanding Officer of the MSO



Photo courtesy of USCG

Captain Hamilton is a 1983 graduate of Williams Jennings Bryan College where he earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in biology and has since earned a master's degree in environmental management from George Mason University; Fairfax, Va. Hamilton received his commission as an ensign after completing officer candidate school at the Coast Guard Academy in New London, Conn., in 1984.

Hamilton reports to Sector Anchorage having completed an assignment as the deputy commander at Sector Los Angeles/Long Beach, Calif. Hamilton had over-sight of more than 440 personnel, five Coast Guard cutters, three small-boat stations and one air station.

His assignments have included units in Ohio, Louisiana, Wisconsin and Alaska. His previous assignment in Alaska was the executive officer of Marine Safety Office Anchorage. Cook Inlet RCAC is looking forward to working with Captain Hamilton and his staff to promote safe marine transportation and facility operations in Cook Inlet.

Zaliv America

On July 10, members of the Coordinating Committee or the Pacific States - British Columbia Oil Spill Task Force visited Cook Inlet to gain insight on the Oil and Gas Industry in Alaska. The mission of the Task Force, whose members represent Alaska, British Columbia, Washington, Oregon, California, and Hawaii, is to strengthen state and provincial abilities to prevent, prepare for and respond to oil spills.



The Group aboard XTO Energy's Platform A

Cook Inlet RCAC staff and representatives from the Task Force were given the opportunity to tour XTO Energy's Platform A, Cook Inlet Spill Response and Prevention, Inc facility, and the ConocoPhillips LNG facility and dock.

Alaska Oil and Gas Infrastructure Risk Assessment

Cook Inlet's oil and gas facilities are scheduled to be included within a state-wide risk assessment concerning the infrastructure of the oil and gas industry. Though the facilities in Cook Inlet are well maintained, many of them date back to the sixties.

“Due to a series of pipeline leaks in the late 1990's, the Council called for a risk assessment in Cook Inlet that would examine the aging facilities and sub-sea pipelines in Cook Inlet” said Michael Munger Cook Inlet RCAC Executive Director “Working closely with the ADEC has resulted in the inclusion of Cook Inlet's facilities in this risk assessment. We are thrilled that this project will be soon underway. ”

As the Council staff worked with the State to secure the risk assessment they also negotiated an agreement with Cook Inlet's pipeline operators to set up

a volunteer pipeline reporting project designed to ensure the structural integrity of the pipelines operating in and around the Cook Inlet area.

