

**Meeting of the Houston/Galveston Navigation
Safety Advisory Committee
January 25, 2001**

On the call of its sponsor, Rear Admiral Paul J. Pluta, USCG, Commander, Eighth Coast Guard District, and after public notice in the Federal Register (Notice of Meetings, 66 Fed. Reg. 2947, January 12, 2001), the fifty-ninth meeting of the Houston/Galveston Navigation Safety Advisory Committee was held on Thursday, January 25, 2001. The meeting was held in the boardroom of the Port of Houston Authority building in Houston, Texas. The published agenda for the meeting is included as enclosure (1). A list of attendees is attached as enclosure (2). The documents which were made available to and/or prepared by the Committee are available for public inspection and copying at the office of the Committee's Executive Secretary, CDR Peter S. Simons, USCG, at U.S. Coast Guard Vessel Traffic Service Houston/Galveston, 9640 Clinton Drive, Houston, TX 77029. Documents are also available electronically through the Committee's website (www.uscg.mil/hq/g-m/advisory/hogansac/hogan.html). A verbatim recording of the meeting was made and is available upon request. Requests for copies of the recording must be received by January 31, 2003.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Tim Leitzell at 9:10 AM.

OPENING REMARKS BY COMMITTEE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Captain Wayne Gusman welcomed members and guests. He welcomed and congratulated Captain Kevin J. Eldridge, USCG (Chief of Staff, Eighth Coast Guard District) who was attending on behalf of the Committee sponsor, noting that Captain Eldridge had recently been selected for promotion to Rear Admiral. After a brief review of the meeting agenda, Captain Gusman reminded attendees of the channel-related navigation restrictions necessitated to facilitate repairs to the I-610 Bridge. Captain Gusman noted that the schedule of navigation restrictions had been established after close consultation with affected parties.

OPENING REMARKS BY COMMITTEE SPONSOR

Captain Eldridge greeted members and guests on behalf of Rear Admiral Pluta. He noted that the Eighth Coast Guard District Change of Command will take place on Friday, May 4, 2001 at the National D-Day Museum in New Orleans. Rear Admiral Roy Casto will assume command of the district after a tour in Washington, DC as Chief of the Office of Acquisition. Captain Eldridge noted that Rear Admiral Pluta's next assignment will be as Assistant Commandant for Marine Safety and Environmental Protection. Thus, he'll continue to stay active in issues important to the Committee and the Galveston, Houston and Texas City areas.

Captain Eldridge also noted that Rear Admiral Pluta had recently signed a letter on behalf of the Committee's Aids to Navigation Knockdown Workgroup. The letter highlights the efforts of the group and distributes a voluntary report form to solicit additional information regarding the problem of aids to navigation knockdowns. Captain Eldridge also complimented the Committee on its various initiatives, noting that it has a reputation as a committee that "produces."

Captain Eldridge then presented a Public Service Commendation Award to Captain Ray Maulden, Martin Gas Marine, on behalf of Rear Admiral Pluta. Captain Maulden was awarded the Certificate of Merit for his public service actions that led to prompt medical attention for a stricken Texas City harbormaster.

SWEARING IN OF NEW COMMITTEE MEMBER

Captain Eldridge then administered the oath of office to Mr. George L. Brumley, Coastal Towing.

OPENING REMARKS BY COMMITTEE CHAIR

Chairman Leitzell welcomed Committee members and guests. He noted the aggressive agenda and asked Committee members to be thorough but brief in their presentations so that the Committee could finish by the appointed time. He then asked Committee members to introduce themselves.

APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 12, 2000 MINUTES

A motion was made and seconded to approve the previous meeting's minutes. (Minutes, without enclosures, of the previous meeting are included as enclosure (3).)

OLD BUSINESS

As a preliminary matter, the Chairman reminded those in attendance that the Committee forms working groups, headed by a volunteer from the Committee, to address specific issues. Working groups then report the results of their progress at Committee meetings.

Dredging projects.

Larry Miller called upon Colonel Buechler, District Engineer, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to update the Committee on the status of the various dredging projects in the Galveston, Houston, Texas City area.

Colonel Buechler distributed a two-page handout summarizing the status of dredging projects. (See enclosure (4)). Colonel Buechler noted that four projects are complete, three are ongoing and two (Mid-Bayou and Mid-Bay) have yet to be awarded. He noted that certain facets of the future dredging contracts (such as evaluation of plans and costs estimates for the barge lanes and coordination on marshland issues associated with the Goat Island project) were already underway. He also noted that his staff as well as the Coast Guard were conducting investigations into the fatal collision between the J.C. LOVE and the TREY DELOACH.

Ms. Roof asked about the status of Five-Mile Cut, hoping that it would be ready for use by recreational boaters before work on the Mid-Bay contract blocked access to the cut through the spoil area further down the bay. She also asked that the channel be marked, when it is available for recreational use. She noted that the "circulation channel" in the middle of Atkinson Island is not navigable by recreational boaters. She also noted that certain piers in the Shoreacres area had been damaged "by wayward

equipment” from channel dredge operations and that “too much of that sort of thing was happening.”

Mr. Miller reported on the status of other dredging projects. Bayport Channel dredging will begin in mid-March of this year. Approximately 800,000 cubic yards of material will be removed. Barbour's Cut dredging was complete in December 2000. He noted that there were pipeline removal operations taking place at Spillman and Alexander Islands. Mr. Miller also noted that Chevron would begin pipeline removal operations in the vicinity of Lynchburg in March of this year. (A total of five pipelines will be removed.) Brown & Root has an oil rig module scheduled to move during the mid-March timeframe as well. TransGlobal Solutions has received permission from the Corps and the Port Authority to construct a facility on the south side of the channel, just west of the Highway 8 bridge. The dock will be built to accommodate a depth of 42 feet alongside. He noted that Kingfisher Marine would begin work sometime this year on deepening & widening-related dredging in the vicinity of Sims Bayou.

He also noted that Reliant Energy had submitted channel closure applications in order to raise power lines running across the ship channel. He called on VTS to elaborate. CDR Simons noted that the Reliant Energy channel closures have been coordinated to take place in conjunction with the closures necessitated for repairs to the I-610 bridge. (The Reliant Energy operations will begin on Saturday, January 27.)

Colonel Buechler noted that a Corps survey showed that some debris had fallen from the I-610 bridge as a result of the allision. The survey showed that there was sufficient water depth above the object, believed to be a beam from the bridge, and that the Corps was looking to modify an existing contract to remove the item.

Mr. Miller noted that there were a variety of maintenance-related dredging projects either planned or projected and that these were putting pressure on existing spoils disposal locations. He noted contacts with individuals from Seariver Maritime, Millenium and Bayer Corporation. He indicated that the Port is in the process of buying a site on the north side of the channel, just east of the Highway 8 bridge. If successful, the site would be ready to accept dredge spoils by the end of 2002.

Captain Morris asked whether the Upper Bay contract was complete. Colonel Buechler noted that it was ongoing. Captain Morris noted that the Houston Pilots were concerned about the project because the dredging operations have actually “skewed” the channel (ships on range at the lower end of the reach are “substantially on the red side” and at the upper end of the reach “substantially on the green side”). Mr. Rozsypal noted that the dredging would be completed next month and that the Corps had a meeting with the Coast Guard “next week” to discuss aids to navigation realignment as a result of the project completion.

Barge lanes.

Mr. Jackson noted that President Clinton signed into law a bill authorizing the construction of barge lanes alongside the Houston Ship Channel between Morgan's Point and Bolivar Roads. Mr. Jackson expressed the Port's appreciation for the efforts of Senator Hutchinson and Representatives DeLay, Bentsen, Green and Lampson for their efforts in support of the barge lanes authorization.

The Committee also voiced its appreciation for the efforts of Port officials in working with area congressmen to ensure that the barge lanes received the appropriate legislative backing.

Colonel Buechler noted that the barge lanes dredging work would be part of a separate contract. This is because the existing dredge operations cannot efficiently do the work required for the barge lanes.

Electronic navigation.

Captain Morris noted that the Houston Pilots are only using two (StarLink and Hydrographic Associates) of the four available vendors. (ARINC and Ross Engineering have not yet submitted updated units for pilots to carry for evaluation. They expect units from both companies shortly.)

AtoN Knockdown Working Group.

Ms. Teichman noted that the group welcomed the letter signed recently by Rear Admiral Pluta. TWA will distribute the letter, together with its revised report form, on behalf of the working group as soon as it receives a copy. Ms. Teichman also noted that the TWA navigation subcommittee and Houston Pilots had been working closely together on a plan for AtoN placement along the deepened & widened channel. A meeting is scheduled at the Corps of Engineers in Galveston for Tuesday, January 30th at 10:00 AM to discuss this.

Chief Warrant Officer Tom Horan, Aids to Navigation Officer, Coast Guard Group Galveston made available two handouts related to the AtoN knockdown problem. These handouts are included as enclosures (5) and (6). There was no discussion of these items.

Facility Mooring Depth Survey Project.

CDR Simons noted that the Facility Information Guide is at the printers. Copies will be ready for sale by mid-February. He thanked Captain Mike Morris for initiating the project and the Galveston/Texas City Pilots and Houston Pilots for their role in developing the format of the Guide. He also thanked facility owners and operators for their critical role in providing the information contained in the Guide. He noted that the Committee's working group would be called together sometime in late March to evaluate user feedback and finalize format changes for the next edition of the Guide. A copy of the flyer publicizing details about purchasing copies of the Guide was distributed at the meeting and is included as enclosure (7).

Mr. Miller noted that the Corps periodically published a port series guide and suggested that it may be appropriate to link the two efforts in the future.

Recreational Boater Education Initiative.

Mr. Schwantes briefly described his concerns regarding the need for mandatory boater education. He noted that Rear Admiral Pluta, at an earlier Committee meeting, suggested the group look to the guidelines of the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators and that boating manufacturers be enlisted to support this cause.

Mr. Schwantes noted that, in his experience, boating manufacturers are opposed to any licensing-related initiative and thus object to any proposed education requirement. He requested that the Committee endorse NASBLA's attempt to have state legislatures enact mandatory boating safety education statutes. Mr. Schwantes distributed a copy of NASBLA's model act. It is included as enclosure (8). Mr. Schwantes noted that through the first ten months of calendar year 2000 there were 190 boating accidents in Texas, 37 of them in the Galveston Bay area.

Mr. Connor noted that over the past two years there have been 700,000 recreational boats sold in the United States. Today, there are 17 million recreational boats in the country and it is projected that there will be 22 million in 2005. He encouraged the Committee to pursue the issue of boater education and offered his assistance to Mr. Schwantes. He noted that individual state legislatures must be encouraged to take action as well.

Mr. Dean Cheramie noted that an education initiative would be also beneficial for individuals in the commercial fishing industry. He suggested that any education course should include a discussion of operating procedures in the vicinity of commercial traffic, particularly tugs and tows.

Captain Gusman noted that commercial fishermen were required to have a license and that the education issue for them was not the same as that proposed for recreational boaters. He noted that he and Captain Don Thompson (Commander, Coast Guard Group Galveston) had recently participated in a fishing vessel outreach symposium. He saw that as a good forum for addressing the kinds of issues raised by Mr. Cheramie.

Mr. Leitzell noted that the Committee had before them a formal recommendation regarding support of a boater education initiative.

Captain Gusman suggested that if the Committee decided to forward the recommendation to the District Commander it do so in a manner that would ask for his support in identifying alternatives to address the problem rather than asking him to support one particular course of action. That would give the District Commander flexibility to best support the Committee in attaining the underlying goal of reducing boating accidents.

Captain Eldridge indicated that states and national organizations like NASBLA receive the vast majority of funds for boating safety programs. Thus, he emphasized that the effort was properly focused on convincing state legislatures to take action on boating safety issues. He also noted that the Coast Guard's Atlantic Area Commander has initiated an Operation Boat Smart program to address recreational boating accidents.

Mr. Leitzell offered to work with Captain Gusman on revised wording for the recommendation and resubmit it for the Committee's consideration.

TNRCC Clean Air Rules and Plans for Houston/Galveston.

Ms. Caplan distributed a summary of the final action of the Texas Natural Resources Conservation Commission regarding the proposed rules for the Houston/Galveston nonattainment area. (See enclosure (9).) She noted that the Commission withdrew a number of the proposed measures from the final action. These included the diesel

emulsion rule and the NOx reduction systems rule the Committee had earlier expressed concern about.

Captain Gusman asked where emissions reductions would come from, given the number of withdrawn rules or measures. Ms. Caplan indicated that part of the reason certain rules were withdrawn was because the Commission realized they were as yet technologically unfeasible. Ms. Teichman noted that, in the interim, the marine industry was looking at voluntary emissions reduction efforts to achieve some of the targets.

Ms. Roof asked how hard manufacturers had been pushed to develop pollution-cutting technology. There was some discussion that efforts in other areas of the country (California, for example) were forcing manufacturers to develop and manufacture more efficient equipment. Captain Eldridge noted that technology is moving ahead, particularly with initiatives in California and Northern Europe. He discussed his experiences with those efforts and noted that the equipment produced for those markets will benefit clean air efforts in the Galveston Bay area as well.

Captain Godinich asked whether speed reductions were included as part of the Commission's plan. Mr. Leitzell replied that they were not, as yet, but that speed reduction proposals would have a safety impact that would be of interest to the Committee.

FPSO update.

Ms. Clark briefly updated the Committee on the status of FPSOs in the Gulf. The Minerals Management Service is preparing an environmental impact statement on FPSOs (floating production storage and offload system). It is due out early next month. She discussed three alternatives (conceptual approval, conditional approval and no action). She indicated that the conditional approval alternative is most likely to be adopted. She indicated that the EIS will be available on the MMS website. (Go to www.gomr.mms.gov, select "Press Releases and Reports," click on "Reports," select "Gulf OCS Region," and scroll down to the entry entitled "EIS Report.")

Chairman Leitzell explained that the Committee would continue to follow the issue because of its impact on navigation safety in the Galveston, Houston and Texas City areas. Specifically, the types of shuttle vessels and density of resulting traffic was of interest to the Committee. Ms. Clark does not forecast any increase in newbuilds in the near future, because of the lag time in new construction, availability of yards for design and construction work and the uncertainty surrounding production capacity of offshore fields. Instead, FPSO traffic in the short term is likely to use vessels hired away from other markets. She forecasts the first FPSOs in the Galveston Bay area in two years.

NEW BUSINESS

State of the Waterway.

Lieutenant Steve Depew, Operations Officer, Vessel Traffic Service Houston/Galveston delivered the State of the Waterway Address. Copies of the slide presentation and text of the address are included as enclosures (10) and (11).

Captain Ambrose suggested that the vessel casualty data presented be amended to include the ages of the vessels involved. Mr. Leitzell suggested that the data also include information on a vessel's classification society and flag state. VTS will modify its incident report form to capture these variables and attempt to reconstruct the data for the most recent calendar year.

Captain Mike Morris asked about plans for the vessel air draft sensor. Commander Simons indicated that VTS was working with the Texas Department of Transportation to assess the feasibility of existing technology. A company that manufactures sensors will visit the Houston area at the end of February to meet with the Coast Guard and TexDOT. Assuming technology can be applied to the marine environment a working group will be formed to further evaluate the proposal, develop policy for use of the sensors and make specific recommendations for sensor placement. Captain Morris emphasized that at least two sensors would be required (one for inbound traffic and one for outbound vessels). He also noted that some ships shift between City Dock berths and facilities just beneath the bridge and those transits must be considered in any decision related to placement of the sensors. Captain Gusman also noted that the Coast Guard was working with the Houston Pilots to examine the procedures by which a ship certified its air draft calculations. He emphasized that that process was an important part of any prevention effort.

Mr. Weeks suggested that the VTS include weather-related channel closure data in future presentations (e.g., how many hours traffic was hampered by low visibility conditions). Mr. Miller noted that the Port maintained such data and would make it available upon request.

Update of Port Hurricane Readiness Plan.

Petty Officer Tom Argo, Planning Department, Marine Safety Office Houston-Galveston briefed the Committee on the MSO's initiative to revise the Hurricane Readiness Plan for the Captain of the Port zone. A copy of the slides used during his presentation is included as enclosure (12).

As a preliminary matter, he noted that the plan was being redrafted to standardize it with a newly released Coast Guard instruction. He also indicated that the plan had both an internal and an external component. For example, the plan identified pre-hurricane season responsibilities so that the Coast Guard and channel-side facilities could better prepare themselves for severe weather conditions well before an advancing storm. He then noted that there were two underlying purposes for the plan: standardize port condition terminology and provide policy on control of commercial vessels before and after severe weather conditions.

He reviewed the terminology included in the plan (e.g., condition "Whiskey") and the actions (e.g., notify facilities, monitor ships in port, institute traffic controls, etc.) associated with each condition. He reviewed in detail the specific provisions of the various readiness conditions. (Slides five through eight in enclosure (12) discuss these provisions.) He also distributed a two-page storm preparedness checklist, which is included as enclosure (13).

Mr. Hafele, from the National Weather Service, asked what baseline was being used to determine the various port conditions. Petty Officer Argo indicated that it was based on

National Weather Service projections. Mr. Hafele informed the audience that the National Hurricane Center will this year begin including forecasts of 35 and 64 knot winds radii (in addition to 50 knot winds) in its 72 hour forecast. (In the past only 50 knot wind information was provided.)

Tim Leitzell noted that the Committee in the past has been involved in developing and updating an aids to navigation restoration plan so that vessel traffic along the ship channel can be quickly restored once a hurricane has passed through the area. Captain Gusman noted that Group Galveston, the Marine Safety Office and the Port Emergency Committee all have a role to play in such an effort.

Captain Gusman thanked Petty Officer Argo for his thorough presentation and noted that the plan is a work in progress. He encouraged feedback from members of the port community so that the plan can most accurately reflect the needs and priorities of the entities impacted by severe weather in the Galveston, Houston and Texas City areas.

Mr. Thorjussen asked if, based on the effort involved in updating the plan, there was any need for changes in the manner in which the channel was surveyed or damaged aids were restored after a storm. Captain Gusman replied that the focus of the new instruction was on planning and preparing for severe weather and that he anticipated the procedures for a post-storm response would not change significantly as a result of the instruction. He noted that the Coast Guard will exercise the new plan prior to the upcoming season to fully evaluate its effectiveness.

Print-on-Demand Nautical Charts for the Houston/Galveston area.

Mr. Richard Sillcox, project manager for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Print-on-Demand Nautical Chart program, addressed the Committee. POD charts are up-to-date paper charts printed by a contractor (OceanGrafix) in partnership with NOAA. They incorporate all corrections from weekly Notice to Mariners as well as safety information originating from NOAA. The POD project is currently in a pilot phase. Both NOAA and OceanGrafix are seeking feedback from mariners on both the concept and underlying implementation details. Mr. Sillcox distributed two handouts, included as enclosures (14) and (15).

After briefly describing the history behind, and usefulness of, the POD chart project, Mr. Sillcox discussed the two barriers (technological and legal) that have recently fallen, allowing NOAA to move ahead with the project. He then contrasted the currency of the charts available through the print-on-demand program with standard nautical charts available either in the United States or through the British Admiralty. He discussed the format of four Houston-area charts he distributed for review at the meeting. The print-on-demand program, for example, allows OceanGrafix to print custom information (radio frequencies, VTS reporting points, company logos, etc.) in text boxes immediately adjacent to the standard nautical chart, thereby increasing the utility of the final product.

He discussed the goals of the pilot project: assess the cost of producing charts in a print-on-demand format and obtain mariner feedback on the program. He provided samples of print-on-demand charts and encouraged mariners to return the product questionnaires so that NOAA and OceanGrafix can further refine the program.

He discussed the manner in which POD products may be purchased- through a local distributor (who would order them from OceanGrafix), via subscription service (where updated charts are automatically sent according to the directions of the customer) or directly from OceanGrafix. He also noted that the data on the charts themselves could be customized (to remove LORAN lines or add tracklines, for example), further increasing the utility of the product.

Captain Morris asked for information on the cost of a print-on-demand printer, noting that the vendor who supplies charts to the Houston Pilots had indicated the cost of equipment was too high for them to be able to participate in the pilot project. Mr. Leitzell noted that the program is not yet set up for mariners to obtain charts at a local vendor. Instead, the vendor places an order for the customer who receives the charts in the mail (directly from OceanGrafix or through the original vendor). Ms. Susan Williams, representing OceanGrafix, noted that in the future local vendors may in fact be licensed to produce POD charts directly at their place of business. However, the current focus is enabling chart agents to sell POD charts as one part of their product line.

Captain Ambrose asked for additional information on the subscription service program. Mr. Sillcox noted that the service was not yet available. However, NOAA was studying it as an option, believing that mariners might find it useful because it enabled them to customize charts, including chart delivery and updating services, to best fit the needs of individual customers.

Mr. Weeks asked if NOAA had considered maintaining a chart history on their web page. Mr. Sillcox noted that they had, in fact, looked at the feasibility of doing so and were also working to develop a system that would differentiate between major chart changes and minor ones to facilitate Coast Guard inspection efforts in a POD environment.

Mr. Miller asked about plans to incorporate chart changes resulting from the deepening and widening project. Mr. Sillcox indicated that those changes are incorporated as soon as they are received from the Corps of Engineers or the Coast Guard.

Channel Closure Procedures.

Mr. Thorjussen indicated that he had had discussions with the Coast Guard (during a meeting with VTS, MSO and the Houston Pilots) and that he was satisfied with the current procedure for requesting, reviewing and approving channel closure “permits.”

Establishment of Working Group to Examine Impact of Passing Vessels on Moored Ships.

Mr. Bill Boehm (Stolt-Nielsen) has volunteered to lead a group to look into the issue. He noted that he had begun looking into the problem about six months ago when ships moored at certain channel-side facilities experienced problems due to the surge from passing vessels. After he presented the issue at the Committee's January 11th working group meeting a number of individuals have stepped forward to serve on the group. He is looking for a representative from at least one other shipping company as well as representatives from each of the local pilot associations before organizing the first meeting sometime in February.

Mr. Leitzell noted that Mr. Wheeler has volunteered to serve as the Committee representative to the working group.

Ship Movement Procedural Changes in the post-Deepening and Widening Channel.

Captain Morris noted that the Houston Pilots had begun meeting wide-bodied ships as far up the channel as lighted buoys 41 and 42 since dredging work had been completed to that point. He noted that an industry group had been formed to further examine the issue. Ms. Deborah Richards (Equiva) has volunteered to head this effort.

Dredge Conference report.

Captain Mike Morris noted that the Committee had recommended, at the January 11th working group meeting, that semi-annual or even quarterly meetings be held with the dredge companies to discuss issues of mutual interest and concern. He endorsed that initiative.

On a related matter he welcomed the Corps' monthly reports on channel conditions but noted that some of the information contained in them was inaccurate (because it indicated less water than was actually available). (A copy of the January Hydrographic Report is attached as enclosure (16).) He was concerned that the disparity between data published in the report and actual channel conditions could lead to liability for mariners in the event of a grounding or other marine incident. Mr. Miller indicated that he would work with the Corps to ensure that the published information was correct and up-to-date.

Mr. Thorjussen indicated that West Gulf Maritime was committed to hosting a second dredge conference if there was a need for one. He proposed a date of Friday, February 23. [Note: In discussions after the Committee meeting the date of the conference was changed to Friday, March 16.] Various Committee members endorsed the need for an additional conference.

Ship trim discussions.

Captain Morris noted that many of the smaller tankers being brought up the ship channel arrive with an even keel. He indicated that ships' masters say they are asked to arrive at the dock in an even keel condition to facilitate gauging prior to transfer. He noted that if one to two foot of drag were to be put on the ships the handling characteristics would improve dramatically. He noted that this should not be difficult to accomplish, given the segregated ballast systems present on modern ships. Captain Morris asked that this information be passed on to ship's agents.

Captain Ambrose expressed surprise that the agents were responsible for the "even keel" instruction cited by Captain Morris. He noted, however, that local pilot associations often impose requirements on ship's masters and suggested that the Houston Pilots issue guidelines regarding ship's trim conditions for vessels calling on Houston facilities.

Ms. Clark also noted that this issue was intertwined with mooring conditions at certain facilities because ships trimmed by the stern required more water than was currently

available at some facilities. In addition, trimming a ship by the stern might also mean sacrificing some portion of the vessel's cargo-carrying capacity.

Captain Morris noted that he would take the issue back to the pilots' safety committee and see what action the pilots might be able to take in publicizing the issue.

Captain Gusman noted that this might be a good topic for discussion at an upcoming MSO outreach initiative with vessel agents. He promised to notify the Houston Pilots of the date of that event.

Harbor Safety Committee conference initiative.

Mr. Leitzell noted that for the past two years the National Harbor Safety Committee conference has been held in New York. This year the conference will be held in San Francisco. [The conference is scheduled for March 19 and 20 at the Argent Hotel.] Mr. Leitzell suggested that the Committee commit itself to hosting the conference somewhere in the Galveston, Houston or Texas City area during calendar year 2002. He noted that the Port Bureau had volunteered to assist with many of the administrative details associated with the conference.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the full Committee will be held at the offices of the Houston Pilots on Thursday, May 24th. The meeting will begin at 9:00 AM. The offices of the Houston Pilots are located at 8150 South Loop East, Houston. (Call 713-645-9620 for directions.)

The Committee's working groups will meet on Thursday, May 10th at the Houston Yacht Club. The meeting will begin at 9:00 AM. The Houston Yacht Club is located at 3620 Miramar Drive, Shoreacres. (Call 281-471-1255 for directions.)

CLOSING REMARKS BY COMMITTEE SPONSOR

Captain Eldridge began by reiterating Rear Admiral Pluta's regrets that he was not able to attend the Committee meeting. He noted that Rear Admiral Pluta had been called to Tampa (Florida) to assist in the memorial service for crewmembers lost in the sinking of the BLACKTHORN in 1980.

He complimented the Corps of Engineers, particularly Colonel Buechler the District Engineer, for their support of major navigation safety initiatives (such as barge lanes) associated with the deepening and widening project. He also cited the work of the AtoN Knockdown Workgroup for their progress to date. He noted that there was still much work to be done but he looked forward to continued success from that group. He expressed his appreciation to the Committee for their role in compiling the Facility Mooring Depth Guide. He cited work on the boating safety effort, noting that it was consistent with the Commandant's fifth strategic objective for the Coast Guard- mobility, that is "more ability" to use the waterway by recreational boaters, fishermen and commercial shipping interests. He noted that the issue of emissions reductions would continue to be a challenging one. From its beginnings with the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 to recent international efforts to address the problem through initiatives such as MARPOL Annex VI it remains an issue of wide-reaching importance and relevance to the maritime community.

Captain Eldridge noted that a great benefit to him in attending HOGANSAC meetings is the wealth of information he learns at each session. He cited the presentation on the discussions of the port hurricane readiness plan and complimented Captain Gusman and Petty Officer Argo on their initiative. He also expressed appreciation for the quality of this year's state of the waterway address, citing Commander Simons and Lieutenant Depew for their continued involvement in this important waterway management tool.

Finally, Captain Eldridge noted, in response to many questions, that he would be leaving the District staff in early March to head to Washington to assume his new duties as Assistant Commandant for Congressional and Public Affairs. He expressed hope that his new duties would give him the opportunity to return to the Galveston Bay area sometime in the future.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 12:03 PM.

WAYNE D. GUSMAN
Executive Director

Certified: TIMOTHY R. LEITZELL
Committee Chair

- Encl:
- (1) Published Agenda
 - (2) List of members and public in attendance
 - (3) Minutes of September 12, 2000 HOGANSAC meeting
 - (4) Status of dredging on Houston-Galveston navigation channels, Texas
 - (5) Current Aid Discrepancy List
 - (6) AtoN cost documentation
 - (7) Facility Mooring Depth Guide brochure
 - (8) Recreational Boater Safety Education Recommendation
 - (9) Summary of final action of the Commission regarding the Houston/Galveston Attainment Demonstration
 - (10) 2000 State of the Waterway Presentation
 - (11) Text of State of the Waterway Address
 - (12) Port Operations Severe Weather Policy
 - (13) Storm Preparedness Planning for Oceangoing Vessels: "Remaining in Port Checklist"
 - (14) The World's Most Up-to-Date Nautical Charts
 - (15) Sample Product Questionnaire
 - (16) Forecast of Dredging and Marine Construction and January 2001 Hydrographic Report