

EPAC STRATEGIC PLANNING MEETING
January 23, 2003 AM

A. Welcome and Introduction

CAPT Cuzme welcomed everyone and expressed his appreciation for attending the first meeting of 2003. This was followed by individual introductions by each meeting attendee as follows:

CAPT José Cuzme – IHS Director of Division of Facilities Planning and Construction.

RADM Bob Williams – Chief Engineer / Division Director ATSDR.

CDR Mike Coene – Software Engineering FDA.

LCDR Dave Ausdemore – Bio-Engineer.

CDR Kathy Poneleit – Office of the Surgeon General.

CAPT Sven Rodenbeck - ATSDR.

LTJG Allen Bollinger – EPAC secretary this year. IHS Division of Facilities Operations.

CDR Ed Cayous – IHS Division of Facilities Planning and Construction.

CDR Todd Scofield – IHS Facility Engineer

CAPT Gene Sullenger – 7th year with EPAC.

CAPT (Ret) Tom Bedick – Facilities Engineer at NIEHS.

Mr. Brian Kong – NIH campus in Bethesda in public works.

LCDR Sue Neurah – Works at ATSDR as a bio-engineer.

Ms. Lisa Hayes – ATSDR environmental engineer. Assistant to the chief engineer.

Mr. Bradley Provancha – NIH detail to HHS where he is working on Operations and Maintenance.

Ms. Crystal Allen – NIEHS Mechanical Engineer.

B. Chief Engineer Strategic Topics for 2003

RADM Williams added welcoming remarks and gives special thanks to Tom and NIH for hosting this meeting. He highlighted the following EPAC's areas of focus.

Recruiting & Retention: As part of recruiting, we are emphasizing to applicants the different possible career paths. However, once hired there is no mechanism to provide career path information.

Leadership Development: Leadership skills are necessary core competencies and life-long skill that must be developed throughout the ranks of the Engineer Category.

Esprit-De-Corps: There is a need to unify and instill spirit among the Engineer Category. The PHS Engineer's Song and Engineer coin are examples of the ongoing work to increase the sense of Esprit-De-Corps.

Recognition: Need to continue identifying ways to recognize the accomplishments of individuals in the engineering category. Efforts under way to develop awards to recognize architects. It is important to bring recognition not just to the individual but to the PHS.

RADM Williams had four priorities for the category when he was selected as CPO, which are similar to the focus areas listed above:

1. Recruiting and Retention: Currently have about 30 recruiters including the Surgeon General. We are striving to retain engineers through the mentorship program and by career counseling of younger officers. We are in the process of setting up associations with schools of engineering

including presentation of plaques with their logo and our logo. We are also informing universities of our desire to actively recruit engineers to the PHS through presentations, and providing information to professors about the PHS.

2. Recognition: We have five people being recognized at NSPE Federal Engineer of the year luncheon which represent a largest percentage of any group in competition for the award including two in the top Ten.
3. Registration: It is important to have our engineers get their PE or other equivalent certification.
4. Response: This includes areas such as Emergency preparedness, leadership in the healthy buildings initiative, and logistics of deploying officers in emergency situations. As part of response it is necessary to know the skills and abilities of our engineers, so if asked if we can provide a service we can make the determination of PHS's ability to perform the task.

Other Hot Topics

1. Healthy building initiative. Been working on this since 94, maybe earlier than that. Met with CAPT Barror and Surgeon General. SG likes the idea of this healthy building initiative. Thinks it's very beneficial. Looking for a workshop on this topic that he can come to. Healthy buildings are looking at health from a prevention point of view. Fits in very well with SG's initiatives.
2. Leadership development seminar. On course with leadership seminar in Tucson, AZ. Leadership is found at all levels. This is something that we may want to do across all PACs. People that went to the last seminar are still using the skills that were learned. Will have a short presentation at SAME National Conference. Afternoon program will discuss the topic. All services will join in the afternoon and join the comradery.
3. Transformation of the corps – This may create a lot of change in the service. This will be coming from the top and will include Prevention and CCRF membership.

C. OSG Strategic Topics – CAPT Rick Barror.

Appreciates CAPT Cuzme and RADM Williams's leadership. RADM Williams shines over all previous Chief Engineers.

SG's 5 priorities from 1-day retreat.

1. Medicare/ Medicaid reform
2. Preparedness – bio-security. Goal-One comprehensive approach for many situations.
3. Prevention – collaboration with all of HHS on prevention of obesity and diabetes.
4. Health disparities – closing the gap, access and quality of care.
5. Information Technology – Better use including getting information out into the private sector. Telemedicine is where Engineers are likely to be involved.

SG priorities.

1. CC is priority. – Achieve parity with other services - Leadership, value, training, officership.
2. Secretary's transformation plan. Plan in writing. Embedded at the highest levels including OMB. It is in the FY03 and FY04 budgets. OSG has been a major player.

3. Secretary also coming out with a diabetes initiative. Corps will be involved and screening will be a major component.

The President has charged the SG with:

1. Bio-terrorism
2. Healthy living / physical fitness
3. Alcohol and drug abuse

SG has charged the Commissioned Corps with three main tasks.

1. Global Health
2. Prevention – Changing behavior and environment.
3. Preparedness – Wants to look at Public Health infrastructure.

SG reports that are underway:

- Bone Health and Osteoporosis
- Women's and Men's Health
- Healthy Indoor Environments
- Correctional Health Surrounding the Incarcerated

The SG has ideas on ways he would like to revitalize the Corps. It has been side tracked with the Dept of Homeland Security Bill and the Bio-Terrorism Bill. The process is back on track with even more support from people above the OSG. It's close to being final. Will have 8-10 sub initiatives, such as:

- Increasing the value of the Corps through increasing the value of the person.
- More emphasis on offering direct care and less administration.
- Need a strong Ready Reserve.
- There will be some operational rearranging.

EPAC should consider the roles of engineers in deployment and determine how to prepare engineers for deployment. Engineers have been highly regarded in deployment right behind Physicians and Nurses in importance to CCRF.

We should try to get civil service doctors to join the Corps or at least the inactive reserves. If we had a viable ready reserve then we would be more attractive. We are not at parity with other services as far as retirement and 2 weeks of leave time for drills.

Mr. Brad Provancha suggested the use of Angel Flights to move personnel resources. Angel Flight is running at 50 percent capacity. Therefore, Angel Flights currently has capacity to transport personnel when commercial flights are not viable. Mr. Provancha will follow up with details.

D. Healthy Buildings Initiatives

Mr. Brian Kong presented a Concept Workshop for 2003.

A building goes through many stages

1. Construction – construct/design/commission (ASHRAE guidelines, off-gassing)
2. Occupation – Move, renovate, maintain
3. Destruction

80% to 90% of our time is indoors: 85% of buildings had environmental conditions that were sufficient to make occupants ill according to one survey (Vital C: The quality of the air in our buildings. Indoor built Environment 2001; 10:266-270).

From Building Community Perspective

- IAQ - Indoor Air Quality
- IEQ - Indoor Environment Quality
- SBS - Sick Building Syndrome
- Greening
- Sustainability – global aspect of recycling

Medical community needs to bring this to the forefront.
Construction dust issue – can breed bacteria and germs.

HBI purposes

1. To develop a framework to guide the establishment of universally accepted standards and criteria.
2. To organize the compendium of current resources in this area, and
3. To promote continued and new research on the subject of interaction between the indoor built environment and public health

HBI objectives

1. Affirm, based on scientific evidence, public health problems in the indoor built environment;
2. Discuss how improvements in public health can be achieved through improved indoor environment quality;
3. Discuss PHS' role in the HBI's purpose;
4. Discuss the development of universally acceptable standards and criteria;
5. Encourage the organization and management of a compendium of current resources;
6. Promote continued and new research on the interaction between public health and the indoor built environment; and
7. Stimulate collaborative efforts between the building, medical, and public health communities to improve public health

“Melinda” Bill is pending in congress; under this Legislation mold remediators would have to be required to be licensed and the US EPA & CDC would be mandated to develop safety standards for mold levels under a federal legislative initiative. Would require the EPA and CDC to establish guidelines specifically stating danger levels for mold. (ASHRAE Journal June 2002)

HBI & Public Health Issues

- Can affect respiratory illness – potential annual health benefit of 16-37 million avoided cases of common cold or influenza
- Can affect allergies and asthma – potential annual health benefit of 8-25% decrease in symptoms for 53 million allergy sufferers and 16 million asthmatics
- Can affect sick building syndrome (SBS) symptoms – potential annual health benefit of 20-50% reduction in SBS health symptoms experienced frequently at work by ~15 million workers
- Can affect worker performance – potential benefit from changes in thermal environment and lighting

Source: William J Fisk, 2002. "How IEQ Affects Health, Productivity." ASHRAE Journal May 2002.

Lighting changes can change productivity. It has been proven that day lighting improves learning in elementary children. <http://www.epa.gov/iaq/pubs/hpguide.html>

Note: If buildings not maintained properly indoor air quality can get worse.

CAPT Cuzme mentioned the need of a guideline for certifying a building as a "healthy building" and that he would like EPAC to partner with the medical community and get some cause & effect reasoning so that we state some statistic e.g. "If we do this we will make 50% less people sick."

E. ESPRIT-DE-CORPS

CAPT Cuzme made reference to review the handouts proposed precepts. This will give officers a guide to what the expectations are during the promotion process. This would indicate what is expected of the "Best" officer, which would be used for promotion instead of the current system. The current promotion board requires each of the board members to write up their criteria for promotion based on the "Average" officer criteria. The new proposal sets up specific transparent criteria.

Proposal is to take effect with the promotion cycle in 2004. The following comments were expressed:

- The Agency has less input and could get off balance.
- This will really unbalance the 2 personnel systems. Has anyone done a comparison between the Corps and Civil Service? Civil Service is a different personnel system and it's that way on purpose. BIG difference is Corps can be ordered to move. Civil Service can be asked to move, but do not have to actually go. The OSG initiated these new precepts.
- Collateral duties those outside your billet or PD that you do on a regular basis would have to be listed on the COER for credit.
- There is nothing on the Matrix about the Scope of the work that you do. How hard your position is compared to some one else doing your same job. Example: maintaining a 10,000-ft² building vs. a 5,000-ft² one.
- One precept should state to be in CCRF, not matter what category you are in under that.

Action item: Get comments in to Allen so EPAC can submit them to the OSG.

F. Recruitment and Retention

CAPT Cuzme presented a Senior COSTEP enhancement proposal for consideration. He made reference to the handout and stated that within IHS it's definitely doable, that between agencies it's doable, but would not be easy. Some comments were: This is a positive thing and could include getting licensure, CCRF training, and other things to help an officer's progression on the precepts. Need 5 years in service (straight out from school) to have the ability of getting a PE. Have to have some way to dangle a carrot to keep them in the corps past their payback period. The idea should be pursued.

An idea suggested was to have something similar to USUHS for Engineering. Could have engineer retirees teaching. Military has different programs for engineering and it may be possible to tap into that resource.

SG wants a PHS university and this could fit into that idea. Engineers in the Corps went down, Civil Service picked up the slack. And the total numbers of engineers are increasing.

G. Leadership development seminar.

Location: Hilton El Conquistador Golf and Tennis Resort in Tucson, Arizona. It will be three full days. Full agenda on website soon. Have invited the SG, but we have backup speakers to take his place just in case. Hoping to keep the cost under \$200 a person; Registration information for the seminar will be available soon. We are hoping it's even better than the last one. It is time to start doing more marketing. Ray Clark would be the person to talk to in order to find out if there is a possible way to get a MAC flight arranged for the people in the DC area. Mike and Kathy will collaborate in order to see what is needed.

Would like to get a letter of proclamation of Engineers week from the SG. Jose to send the draft to Kathy and Bob. (DONE 1/28/03)

H. Conclusions and Adjourn

1. Goals of OSG
 - i. Prevention
 - ii. Preparedness
 - iii. Closing the gap

2. In FY 2003 EPAC priorities.
 - i. Promote CCRF membership to higher numbers.
 - ii. Sponsor/Implement HBI workshop
 - iii. Follow up Sr. CO-STEP enhancement program as proposed with OCE and DCP.
 - iv. Implement and Market the Leadership Development Seminar
 - v. Visibility at Schools in February for Eng Week
 - vi. Market the SAME/EPAC Seattle Conference
 - vii. Market the COA Conference
 - viii. More recognition

3. Action Items:
 - i. Brad Provancha will follow up with information on Angel Flights in case of emergency.
 - ii. Brian Kong will coordinate package of healthy buildings workshop conference for presentation by OCE.
 - iii. Comments from EPAC members on Precepts concept by Jan 31st, to LTJG Bollinger and CAPT Cuzme.
 - iv. Comments from EPAC members on Benchmarks by Feb 15th to LTJG Bollinger and CAPT Cuzme.
 - v. Letter of Proclamation for Engineers' Week for OSG. CAPT Cuzme, CDR Poneleit, and OCE.
 - vi. Better marketing of Awards by subcommittee.

CAPT Cuzme ended the Strategic session by thanking everyone for their contributions and attendance.
