

Minutes of the Meeting of the  
Engineer Professional Advisory Committee  
Thursday September 25, 2003

The Engineer Professional Advisory Committee (EPAC) welcomes your input and participation. Meetings are open to all PHS Engineers and Architects. Those who are not able to attend in person may attend via conference call. Please contact the Executive Secretary at 301-443-1367 for the place and conference access number.

I. **CALL TO ORDER**

A. CAPT Cuzme, EPAC Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 1 PM ET in Rockville, MD. The August minutes were held pending for the October meeting. The next meeting will be held on Thursday October 23 at 1:00 p.m. in **Gaithersburg, MD at the FDA building**. The agenda will be sent by email.

II. **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

A. **Office of the Chief Engineer (OCE):** RADM Robert Williams reported the following announcements.

- i. Agencies encouraged to submit 2004 Federal Engineer of the Year nominations, through the respective Agency Awards Coordinator, to Donna Jackson, HHS Awards Coordination by OCT 9. OPDIV and Agency engineer recognition are closely linked to these nominations. More information on the <http://www.usphsengineers.org> website.
- ii. RADM Williams attended the National Park Service annual meeting in Las Vegas. It was a great meeting and he was glad to see that PHS Officers in the NPS were very high-spirited.
- iii. Craig Vanderwagon, CPO of Physicians Category, will be in Baghdad, for 90-120 days to help plan and rebuild the medical infrastructure.
- iv. Promotion Activities for 2004 include, revised temporary, permanent, and deployment instructions for submission to the agencies for comment. Over 95% of the past comments were considered in revising the instructions.
- v. Special Assignment award is available for PAC members with 30+ days of involvement.
- vi. DCP: A Proposal has been received from a contractor to support the Training, Force Management and Recruitment tasks. January 04 – Commissioned Corps bulletin will be available online only. The Blue Book is online with current updates. COERS are 95%

complete.

- B. EPAC Chair:** CAPT José Cuzme reported the following.
- i. Hurricane Isabel: There were 13 engineers deployed. CAPT Cuzme was deployed at the NDMS operations center. Real-time information and communications have improved greatly.
  - ii. CCRF members have been increased 140% since ADM Carmona came onboard. Continued recruiting and related efforts will support this trend.
  - iii. Need more entry-level positions within the various agencies to provide a more balanced structure to the corps.
  - iv. Medical waivers will be a part of the new deployability standards, allowing everyone to meet basic requirements for deployability.
  - v. CCRF members need to keep their certifications and records up to date.

### III. NEW BUSINESS

CAPT Cuzme opened discussion on new business:

- A. SAME 2004 Conference - CDR Poneleit for LCDR Hilda Scharen reported the following:
- i. Preparing for the future architecture and engineering constructions needs – 6 hrs. Topics to be covered: State and local grants, Hospital and Lab needs, Emergency Response (EPA), Hardening of Hospitals and Labs at Level 3 and 4.
  - ii. Public Health Engineers - Innovative and Creative Approaches – 4hrs. Topics to be covered: Arctic Technologies, Sustainability, National Security and Health Effects of Baggage Screening.
  - iii. Other ideas for topics are still open and speakers should contact CDR Poneleit or LCDR Scharen. October 17 is the final deadline to submit abstracts.
- B. COA Conference Anchorage, AK - May 16 – 20- CDR Ken Sun reported the following:
- i. Theme for COA conference in Anchorage Alaska: Public Health Challenges - Working Together for Our Future.
  - ii. Organizing committee has set the following deadlines for category day.  
Oct 1 - Complete draft agenda including schedules and topics.  
Nov 1 - Final agenda including speakers and contact information.  
Jan 15 – Objectives, BIOs, and disclosure forms.

- iii. There will be a general call for papers; specific info will follow.
- iv. \$1100 allocated for expenses for speakers for category day. If we can find a sponsor we can expand the budget and bring in other speakers. ANTHC is sponsoring the lunch for category day. Possibilities for sponsors include: Environmental Water Resources Institute of American Society of Civil Engineers. SAME may also sponsor. Private engineering firms in Anchorage, Reserve Officers Association, USAA are other possibilities for financial sponsorship.
- v. Ken will be working with Career Development Subcommittee.

#### IV. **SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS**

##### A. Awards: CDR Meredith Bond reported the following:

- i. Check the website for information on the awards that are available.
- ii. Current nominations being recognized by the Chief Engineer will be sent to all EPAC members for review to decide on which should be passed forward to the SG for additional recognition. Additional thoughts on this include special consideration for Certifications beyond what is required for their job, but would be useful for CCRF. Also, there is a distinct difference between Certification and Licensure.

##### B. Building Design and Construction: Mr. Brian Kong reported the following:

- i. Subcommittee's monthly meeting was held on 2003-09-09.
- ii. Healthy Buildings Initiative (HBI) - subcommittee is investigating other resources including United States Green Building Council LEED. B.Kong and J.Cox-Ganser of NIOSH had a conference call to review the several comments received on the current SG workshop draft agenda. One strong workshop that encompasses main issues (Indoor Air Quality, light, sound, and vibration) would be more effective than a series of workshops. Preferable location is at NIH Natcher conference center. Spring 2004 is contingent upon funding and agenda, which will be further discussed. A key to success is focus on original goals and purposes. It appears that CDC's NCEH (National Center for Environmental Health) will help with funding. Other funding from HHS agencies would be greatly appreciated.
- iii. Subcommittee is willing to assist with Chair's support in the 2004-05-17 SAME 2004 National Education & Training Conf. & Expo. at San Antonio meeting concerning building design and construction.

- iv. B. Provancha and I attended the noted CII's 2003 annual conference and have summarized some highlights. Can be sent as well as other information upon request. A copy of the Federal Facilities Council <http://www7.nationalacademies.org/ffc/> 2001-10 forum proceedings titled "Owner's Role in Project Management and Pre-project Planning Forum" was sent to EPAC Chair. Hopefully, these valuable resources can be implemented at HHS.
- v. Our next meeting is scheduled for 2003-10-14.

C. Career Development: LCDR Jennifer Martin reported the following:

- i. New Members: LCDR Hawasly and LCDR Nachod.
- ii. Resigning Members: Tom Bedick and LCDR Tatum.
- iii. Currently the focus is shifted to the COA category day due to rapidly approaching deadline.
- iv. Working on creating a career development section on the website and expanding the welcome program.
- v. Next meeting is Thursday October 9, 3pm

D. Leadership Development Seminar ad-hoc subcommittee: LCDR Jennifer Martin reported the following:

- i. After action report is almost done. The subcommittee is working to make sure it is complete and thorough since it will be used as an example for other PACs to follow.

E. Emergency Preparedness: CAPT Rodenbeck reported the following:

- i. Met on September 11.
- ii. Discussed the obstacles and challenges that engineers may have to become Commissioned Corps Readiness Force (CCRF) "Deployable."
- iii. Discussed how the Subcommittee can help engineers overcome those challenges and obstacles.
- iv. Discussed whether there is a need to have engineering specific CEUs certificates for CCRF training or whether the general CEU certificates are adequate. This issue may concern engineers that must obtain continuing education documentation for their PE renewal.
- v. Discussed whether the Subcommittee should work to develop some new CCRF Deployment Roles. Specifically, the Subcommittee is considering making a recommendation to EPAC and CCRF that a Disaster Engineering/Facilities Engineer CCRF Deployment Role be established.

- vi. The Subcommittee will discuss these issues in more depth during our next conference call.
- vii. The next Subcommittee conference call will be on October 9 from 3 to 4:30 PM EDT.

F. Information: CDR Michael Coene reported the following:

- i. Schedule the Engineers Regalement at the Rio Center in Gaithersburg on October 23. Working with CAPT Cuzme to hold the next EPAC meeting at an FDA conference room near the restaurant location. Normal happy hour at the restaurant from 4-6PM.
- ii. An annual photo CD is in development. Send interesting photos/pictures to LCDR Tatum.
- iii. Website redesign is still ongoing.
- iv. CDR Kevin Milne is working on getting PHS included in the American Legion. It did not go forward correctly and was rejected due to a technicality. He will continue working to get it though.

G. Mentoring: CDR Robert Biddle reported the following:

- i. Sept 9 was last meeting.
- ii. CDR Carole Boerner and LCDR Mike Stover are new members.
- iii. Improving the handbook and the on call-mentoring program were discussed.

H. Recruiting and Retention: CDR Helgeson reported the following:

- i. New members: LCDR Katherine Jacobitz FDA, LCDR Steve McGovern IHS, LCDR Ramsey Hawasly IHS
- ii. Associate Recruiter update: 26 in IHS, 4 new ones approved in the recent months for a total of 41 Engineer Associate Recruiters. DCP called for reimbursement for recruiting events not sure how long it will take to get the payments.
- iii. Transformation recruitment goals were discussed. Some existing high-level problems are still evident in the current recruitment process.
  - There is a COSTEP black hole; there is no follow-up with them.

- Unavailability to get direct funding for recruitment activities.
  - Lack of standardized training.
  - Lack of recruitment goals. Not sure where the need is and where the jobs are.
  - Two track of being called to active duty and finding a job in the PHS.
- iv. LCDR Tatum suggested a senior recruiter corps dedicated to only recruiting and training recruiters. Dan Beck indicated this same type of activity was tried in 1995-96, with no feedback available as to the effectiveness or problems with the effort.
- v. Motion passed unanimously that the R&R move forward with their efforts to further define the senior recruiter issue by reaching out to the other categories to get their input and support to and to check on the historical pitfalls that may have affected similar programs.
- vi. Next meeting October 7.
- I. Rules: CDR Poneleit reported the following:
- i. Met September 10 to review candidates for new EPAC members; No LT or below officers applied.
  - ii. Its time to start thinking about who will be running for Chair for 2005. Contact CDR Poneleit if interested.

## V. ANNOUNCEMENTS

### A. DCP Liaison: LCDR Karlson reported the following:

- i. Statistics for January – August 2003
  - General Duty Applications received in Jan- August: 40
  - SrCostep applications: 7
  - JrCostep applications: 49
- ii. Calls to Active Duty (CAD) from Jan. to present: 15  
Fiscal year 2003 - 23
- iii. Current status of category as of September 29, 2003: 33 retirements since November 2002 to September 2003 and 413 current active duty engineer officers in all agencies
- iv. New Engineering Applications received for September as of Sept. 29, 2003. General Duty applications – 4 Senior COSTEP – 0 Junior COSTEP – 0

- v. Total Engineering applications received in August 2003 General Duty – 2 Senior COSTEP – 0 Junior COSTEP - 0
- vi. Budget meeting for recruitment: Engineering was budgeted to approx. \$3,500 for recruitment funding. The category will decide which of the 18 recruitment events they want the funding applied to. Please notify Penny Coppola.

B. TISP Liaison: CDR Beck reported the following:

- i. Reminder of [www.tisp.org](http://www.tisp.org) website.

C. COA Liaison: LCDR Tatum reported the following:

- i. The Executive Director of COA visits Alaska: Gerard M. Farrell, Captain, U.S. Navy (Ret) the Executive Director of the Commissioned Officers Association accompanied by the Association's contracted conference planners made a site visit to Anchorage on 9-16 September 2003 in preparation for the 2004 annual USPHS Professional Conference. This trip was made in conjunction with a familiarization tour hosted by the Anchorage Convention and Visitors Bureau (ACVB). During this visit he met extensively with:

- CDR Cindy Hamlin and CAPT Tom Coolidge, General Planning Committee Co-Chairs
- Category Day planners (CDR Sun)
- Chief of the Commissioned Corps liaison office for the Anchorage/Portland area, CAPT Mike Kieffer.
- Director of the Alaska Area, IHS, Chris Mandregan.
- Leadership of the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC)
- Executive Director of the Alaska Nursing Association
- Dean of the University of Alaska – Anchorage School of Health Professions and Social Service
- Sitka Area Foundation
- South-East Alaska Regional health Consortium
- Administrator of the Alaska Native Medical Center
- Leadership of the Alaska Hospital and Nursing Homes Assn
- Executive Director of the Alaska Public Health Assn, and others.
- CAPT Jay Butler, Conference Scientific Program Co-Chair

- ii. In each of the above meetings he presented the conference goals and objectives and invited these organizations to participate as sponsors, exhibitors, presenters, attendees, etc.

- iii. The COA website (<http://www.coausphs.org/>) has a large number of special links concerning the Transformation.
- iv. The next meeting (the first since the annual conference in Scottsdale) will be October 28th.

D. Junior Engineer Report: LCDR Martinson reported the following:

- i. First, I'd like to report that the Junior Officer Advisory Group (JOAG) is stronger and more active than ever. The JOAG of this past year looks nothing like the JOAG of previous years. Committees are extremely active and attendance to meetings is good. The outgoing Chair, CDR Jeff Salvon-Harman (Medical Coast Guard), did a great job leading JOAG.
- ii. Recently, JOAG held their election of executives. Starting October 1st, JOAG's new chair will be LT Jeff Richardson, a Therapist with IHS. The Chair-Elect, for operational year 2005, is LT Michelle College of ATSDR-Chicago.
- iii. The Professional Development Committee of JOAG is presently working on a Junior Officer reading list that has garnered the attention of many senior officers, so it is rumored. The project is an on-going project, and ideas keep coming in. If the EPAC members have any suggested readings to include on the list, I'd like to hear them. Specifically, I would like to hear any book ideas that might be a good way to disseminate the understanding of PHS engineers to other categories in PHS.
- iv. JOAG is also in the process of coordinating a JOAG-sponsored Basic Officer Training Course (BOTC) in D.C. in December. The focus is on getting all junior officers who have not attended a BOTC to attend. If you supervise a junior engineer officer or mentor one, please consider this opportunity for them.

VI. VACANCIES: Send Vacancy Announcements to LCDR Tatum.

- A. There are SFC and Facilities vacancies listed on the <http://www.dsfc.ihs.gov> website.

VII. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m. EST.

**EPAC MEETING PARTICIPATION:**

Participants: (Members in bold, with alternates attending matched by number to the members absent)

**Ms. Crystal Allen (NIH), LCDR David Ausdemore (CDC), CDR Meredith Bond (At Large), CDR Michael Coene (FDA), CAPT José Cuzme (IHS), CDR Bradley Harris**

**(NPS), LCDR Scott Helgeson (IHS), Mr. Kyung Kim (NIH), Mr. Brian Kong (NIH), CDR Jennifer Martin (CDC), LCDR Jamie Natour (HRSA), LCDR Susan Neurath (ATSDR), LCDR Denman Ondelancy (IHS), CDR Kathy Poneleit (At Large), CAPT Sven Rodenbeck (At Large), CDR Robert Biddle for CDR Todd Scofield (IHS), CAPT Gene Sullenger (FDA), Ms. Lisa Hayes (ATSDR, Ex-officio), RADM Robert Williams (ATSDR, Ex-officio), CDR Dan Beck (TISP Liaison), LCDR Mat Martinson (JOAG Liaison)**

**Members Absent: Mr. Michael Adjodha (FDA), CDR Scott Earnest (CDC), CAPT Rao Surampalli (At Large), LT Sean Boyd (FDA, Ex-officio), CAPT Kevin Chadwick (IHS, Ex-officio), CDR Maurice West (NPS, Ex-officio), LCDR Nicole Wolanski (FDA, Ex-officio), LCDR Nate Tatum (COA Liaison), LCDR Claire Karlson (DCP Liaison), LCDR Hilda Scharen (SAME Liaison)**

**GUESTS: CDR Mark Thomas (IHS), CDR James Luddington (IHS), CDR Ken Sun (IHS, ANTHC), LCDR Peter Nachod (IHS), LCDR Ramsey Hawasly (IHS)**

**AUTHORIZATION:**

I have recorded the above EPAC meeting minutes:

\_\_\_\_\_  
LTJG Allen F Bollinger  
Executive Secretary, EPAC

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

I have read the above minutes, which accurately describe this meeting, and on behalf of the EPAC approve their distribution:

\_\_\_\_\_  
CAPT José F Cuzme, P.E.  
Chairperson, EPAC

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

I authorize distribution of these minutes:

\_\_\_\_\_  
RADM Robert C. Williams, P.E.  
Chief Engineer, USPHS

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date