

## **Golden Triangle Business Roundtable (GTBR)**

Minutes

October 21, 2003

Walter Almon called the meeting to order and welcomed the 79 members, subscribers and guests in attendance.

### **Committee Reports:**

#### **Walter Almon – Construction Industry Institute (CII)**

Skills assessments continue to progress. More workers are becoming skills assessed. The target date to have all workers skills assessed is January 1, 2004.

#### **Walter Almon – Labor Survey**

The labor survey was mailed out.

#### **John Durkay – Legal:**

The DC Legislative situation is uncertain. Very little is expected to happen in occupational safety, the labor department and wage and hour in the next six months. The major concern on the state side is the area air implementation plan. Legal issues there will be rather dynamic.

In November the local area warning system will be discussed. John gave a brief history about SAGE that was formed by industry to provide information about explosions inside the plants. This program was never activated. The group has gone back and rethought the process and agreed that an early warning system of some kind is necessary. Problems that were identified were hearing a siren and how to protect yourself in case of an emergency. They researched how people expect to receive information as well as the time frame. The public wants to know from some public defense official or emergency responder within fifteen minutes what the situation is.

As a result of this study what has developed is an inexpensive social experiment. Plants, area government and the media met and agreed to work together. An immediate communication to the three area television stations and KLVI radio will inform the public of a major outside defense incident. 9/11 made some additional funding available.

The organization that created the warning system is the Southeast Texas Industry Public Relations Association, which is an extension of the Plant Managers Forum.

An early warning system called the Southeast Texas Alerting Network (STAN) will present information on three to five different components to be used in the area. This is the first system of its kind.

#### **George Talbert - Air & Research**

George reported that all car radios since the 1990's have the capability of receiving an emergency signal whether on or off. This information was gathered through the SAGE program.

George reported that twenty million dollars of the taxpayer's money will be spent on an air quality study between 2005 and 2006. Industrial input and participation is encouraged. George believes that scientific research and study will solve the ozone problem for Texas.

**Program Speaker:**

Walter introduced John Sherrod, Entergy Services. John said he is known as the "Storm Boss". His job involves him in more than just hurricane preparations. Entergy serves 2.6 million customers in four states and they have fifteen thousand employees. Their corporate headquarters is located in New Orleans. John stated that there are different types of disasters and there are key components to an effective response. He also shared information on historical storms.

The first and foremost major storm is a hurricane followed by ice storms, floods, tornados, lightening, and severe thunderstorms. What defines a storm is the amount of damage and how severe the damage and how wide the area of impact, whether there is advanced warning and what a utility company can do to get service restored.

Hurricanes and Tornados can be storms that are difficult to repair but for Entergy Ice Storms are the most challenging followed by Floods. Ice Storms present the most danger to personnel.

The storm that John worries about the most is a hurricane. A worst-case scenario would be a category three-hurricane making landfall at the mouth of the Mississippi River because of the levy system that surrounds New Orleans. The storm surge would push twenty -five feet of water into New Orleans and there would be no place to pump the water. This scenario would be catastrophic.

Entergy looks at several categories to see if they have done a good job. The categories are storm duration, cost, information provided to consumers and resources used during an outage.

During normal weather (green) conditions any outage should be restored within two hours. Turbulent weather (yellow) outage restoration is about eight hours. Tornado weather (red) restoration is from eight to forty eight hours. Hurricanes, Ice storms, and Tornadoes with a lot of damage (black) are beyond forty-eight hours to restore service. Entergy's goal is not to exceed seven days before service is restored. Entergy's philosophy to storm response is aggressive and proactive. They plan for the worst and hope for the best. They drill their disaster plan at least once a year. They have had disaster and terrorist plans in place long before 9/11. They use a homegrown communications process and can connect to one hundred people by conference call immediately.

Some significant storms John named were Hurricane George that was responsible for most customer outages. An ice storm in 1994 gets the prize for being the most costly because it was in the two hundred million dollar range. The Easter Flood of 1979 in Jackson, Mississippi was memorable because Entergy had to build a levy to keep the water out of the station and they barely stayed ahead of the rising water. He praised the workers in the field and those who work the phone banks. John finalized his presentation by answering questions from the group.