



Attachment B

Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission Pipeline Safety Division Communications Plan Project

Key Leader Survey Results Summary Draft #3 - 5/8/03

Introduction

Thirty-six key pipeline community leaders in ten different groups were asked a series of questions regarding pipeline safety education and communications responsibilities for reaching the public. They were also asked their opinions regarding current pipeline safety communications effectiveness. Additional questions queried the direction, audience and delivery methods for future pipeline safety messaging. The interviews conducted in each group included:

- Elected officials (2)
- Government and policy makers (3)
- Fire prevention /emergency management officials (6)
- Pipeline companies (4)
- Organizations (2)
- Citizens – right away residents, activists (10)
- Pipeline safety program officials (1)
- Local planners, engineers and public works officials (3)
- Media (1)
- Prevention/dig safely officials (4)

Basic Pipeline Safety

Q. 1 & 2 -- Answers to questions regarding what agencies and organizations are primarily responsible for educating local communities about basic pipeline safety issues varied widely. **Citizens** responses in the federal/state/local level category were dominated by OPS and WUTC, with a few replies for first responders. Citizens also indicated that pipeline companies and citizens groups are also responsible. Other answers were more scattered, but included watchdog organizations, the emergency planning community, media, associations and research agencies.

The one **elected official** that answered the survey felt that pipeline companies, WUTC and local groups were the key to educating citizens about basic pipeline safety, along with local jurisdictions. **Local planners, engineers and public works officials** split their answers between OPS, WUTC, first responders and pipeline companies.



Prevention/dig safely respondents cited OPS, WUTC, one-call centers, first responders and pipeline companies. **Pipeline safety program** officials saw WUTC, first responders and one-call centers as appropriate to serve this function. **Pipeline company** responses were different in that they questioned the effectiveness of media and direct mail in favor of a more personalized response. They also saw roles for OPS, WUTC and local utilities.

Emergency management respondents were fewer but their conclusions were even more diverse. Their answers ranged between pipeline companies, county emergency management, fire departments, local realtors, planning departments and the WUTC. *According to the emergency management responders, pipeline safety information should filter down to neighborhood groups and schools, and private developments as well as businesses and associations.*

Government official's responses were also mixed. One respondent said that the private companies should be the first to educate citizens about basic pipeline safety followed by Federal government, state government and local jurisdictions. In contrast, another government official commented that the WUTC and the DOE should be the first in charge followed by the Citizens Committee for Pipeline Safety and organizations like Safe Bellingham.

For **organization** respondents, WUTC, DOE, OPS and *Call Before You Dig* programs are critical. For the one **media** respondent, the education path was seen as WUTC, OPS, DOE, local cities and pipeline companies.

Q.3 -- The locations to look for pipeline safety information is considerable and there was no clear favorite for **citizens, elected officials** and **pipeline safety program officials**. **Local planners and engineers** favored the municipal research center and the City/County Consortium. **Prevention/dig safely** respondents cited one-call centers and pipeline companies. And, **pipeline company** respondents cited the American Petroleum Institute. For **emergency management** professionals and **organizations**, the WUTC is a clear favorite. For **government officials** and the **media**, the WUTC is the only choice.

Emergency Situations

Q. 1, 2 & 3 -- Who handles emergency situations (as well as who people should contact during an emergency situation) seems clear to most everyone interviewed. It's primarily the first responders through 911.

For responders with more knowledge, like **emergency management** people, the pipelines also play an important role, as do the DOE, Washington State Patrol, Coast Guard, WUTC, DOT, OPS and the EPA. **Local planners and engineers, prevention/dig safely** and **pipeline safety** officials favored first responders and pipeline



owners. **Pipeline companies** favored DOE, fire departments and first responders. For **government**, first responders need to work hand in hand with WUTC. **Organizations** believe that the fire department, police department, emergency management services, National Guard and the Washington State Fire Marshal should all work together. For the one **media** respondent, it is a mix of people from the DOE to the WUTC, EPA, public works departments and first responders.

Q. 4 & 5 -- The decision for the **citizens** groups regarding whether there is a clear plan to respond to an emergency was split. There was a 50/50 split response on whether or not there is a plan, but for all Bellingham is a clear example of a community that is prepared for another disaster.

From the **elected officials** camp there is a clear plan and it is in place. **Local planners, engineers and public works officials** felt their communities have a plan and are prepared to implement in an emergency. Crucial information delivery is tested via training drills, and is implemented through normal public information channels.

Prevention/dig safely respondent's answers were mixed. Half do not think an appropriate plan is in place, while the other half thinks first responders and pipeline companies are well prepared. They all cite emergency drills and practice an appropriate methods to assure that crucial information in communicated to public. **Pipeline safety program** officials think 911 services and emergency response system are set up to deliver crucial information to communities during an emergency. **Pipeline company** responses are mixed regarding the adequacy of response plans and methods for communicating crucial information.

For **emergency management** survey respondents, there is a mixed response on whether or not there is a clear plan if their community is prepared. For **government officials**, there is no clear plan on how to respond and response is based on how fresh a tragedy is within a particular community. In addition to the lack of a clear plan on how to respond, there is also a lack of a clear plan on how to get crucial information out to the public.

For **organizations**, it is the local fire departments' responsibility, but its not clear if the response is meaningful. It's also not clear to organizations if there is a plan on how to get information out to the media. For the **media** there is a solid plan and police department and emergency services via local radio station are set up to communicate crucial information.

Effectiveness

Q. A1--The Federal Office of Pipeline Safety (OPS). Poor to fair grades were noted throughout all of the respondents' answers. Generally, the OPS has a long way to go before they can be seen as being effective in their communication with the public.



Q. A2—Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission – Pipeline Safety Division (WUTC). Overall remarks ranged from poor to great, but WUTC gets high marks for taking on the task of solving the communications puzzle in recent years. According to **government** officials they are doing a good job and they are improving. For **media**, the WUTC has been helpful lately, but they have not been heard from directly. **Organization** respondents believe that the *Call Before You Dig* program is all that is out there. **Pipeline companies** and **other respondent categories** rate the WUTC above average.

Q. A3—Washington State Citizens Committee on Pipeline Safety. Poor to “don’t know,” with some respondents indicating that they didn’t know that the committee played a role in communicating with the public. From the **elected official**, the response was fair. From the **emergency management** camp, only those that are close to the situation are involved in the committee. **Government officials** believe they are doing a fair job in communicating. But, more specifically government officials believe the committee is not designed to communicate with the public, but instead are an advisory group to the WUTC. **Local planners** give them poor marks while **prevention officials** rate their performance as fair. The **pipeline company officials’** ratings were mixed. Others, like the **organization** respondents, feel the citizen group is doing better than good.

Q. A4--Local agencies. A wide divergence in responses, from fair to good to don’t know to too focused on terrorism. **Local planners, prevention program** officials and **pipeline company’s** ratings are mixed. **Pipeline safety** officials say they are doing a B+ job. From the **media’s** perspective, not a lot of outreach from this group.

Q. A5--Pipeline companies. Poor grades from **citizens**, but better marks from **emergency management** officials, especially since Bellingham. From **government**, a fair to minimal job. **Local planners**, and **prevention program** officials ratings were assorted from good to fair. **Pipeline companies** rate themselves as doing a good job. . **Pipeline safety** officials say the pipeline companies are doing a good job. From an **organizations** point of view, they are better than OPS but not average.

Q. A6--Local/regional pipeline safety groups/alliances. Mostly poor, but with a few positive to fantastic ratings.

Q. A7--Environmental Groups. Poor to somewhat adequate.

Q. A8--Media. Poor to good, but only responsive during a political or real situation.



Q. B1. Citizens, elected officials and emergency management officials felt local agencies, for the most part, should be involved in communicating basic pipeline safety issues. For the latter group, there is the issue of coordinated message delivery and funding. Additionally **local planners** felt locals should communicate to locals but should use an official chain of command to avoid duplication of messages. **Prevention officials** believe that every agency should be part of the solution. **Pipeline safety officials** sense just the opposite. Local agencies should only talk to their constituents. **Pipeline companies** had no opinion. According to the **media**, local communities should coordinate their message delivery.

Messages

Q. A & B. -- For **emergency management** officials, the answer is easy “where is it, what’s in it, who does it serve, what are the alternatives and what is the risk to life, safety and the environment.” This category responded that people also want to know what to do in case of an emergency. The **media** respondent backs this up - people just want to know if they are safe.

Government officials think people want to know what kind of precautions to take to prevent incidents and that they want to know where pipes are in relationship to where they live and work. They also want pipeline companies to be accountable to safety and environmental standards. For this category of respondents, people need to know if pipelines are being inspected and that pipeline owners know what they are doing, but they do not think that the public is getting this information.

Basic safety information is required for the public to feel comfortable and knowledgeable about pipelines, according to **citizens** groups. They feel people want to know about the age, location, rights and responsibilities of property owners as well as the maintenance schedules for the pipelines. The information that is available is not easy to obtain and is not helpful. Citizens groups are adamant that people need to have continuously updated records. Citizen groups do not feel the public is getting this information. **Organizations** agree. **Elected officials** believe that the public needs to know where pipes are in relationship to themselves and what is a danger to them and no they are not getting this story.

Local planners, engineers and public works officials were aware that the public wants information that assures them that the pipeline is being operated safely. **Prevention/dig safely** officials said location, disclosure, operational information, safety tips, and who to call to report incidents. **Pipeline safety program** officials said people want information that assures them that the pipeline is being operated responsibly. They felt the public wants to know about system quality, design, construction and testing. And, the public should get all the information that it wants. **Pipeline company** respondents felt that



people want to know about the pipeline that is crossing their property and that they to have information regarding their safety

Emergency management officials judged that people must receive due disclosure during a title search, that they should be provided information that there is a plan for their safety. They also believe that the public needs to know that regulators are looking out for them, that they need to call before they dig on their property, and that they should have confidence in pipeline companies. The **media** respondent believes that people need to get information through the real estate community. They suggested a law requiring pipeline disclosure information regarding pipelines as part of a property sales process.

Q. C. -- Communication with the public can be done through fairs, open meetings, handouts, targeted communication, physical markings on pipeline routes, direct mail to residents living, businesses and schools along the pipelines line, the WUTC Web site, television and radio public service spots. But, no matter what is done, the information needs to be factual, like a “right to know” program. According to the **elected official**, the public should be provided information at the point of purchasing a home. For **emergency officials**, information to the public can be disseminated through direct mail and direct contact with people living along the pipeline, along with education of children and public forums. **Government officials** believe that people are oversaturated and won’t hear the messages no matter the delivery method. One suggestion is in line with something heard at the Bellevue public meeting – to give the pipeline companies a report card, put it on the Web and publicize the scores.

Local planners and engineers felt actual simulations are needed in each community annually. They also suggested Web sites, public meetings and a variety of direct mail tactics. **Prevention/dig safely** respondents suggest television, Web sites, open houses and community meetings. They were in favor of using all mediums available. **Pipeline safety program** officials felt television and radio are the best mediums, along with cooperative communications programs between various stakeholders. **Pipeline companies** favored television and Internet ads. For **organizations**, no matter the vehicle of communication, the information needs to be free of PR spin.

Q. D, E & F. -- Information needs to be credible and provided by a credible source. Information authenticated by a third party is more credible. According to **citizens** groups, information from pipeline companies is suspect, but it is also suspect if it comes from a regulatory community that is afraid of angering the pipeline community. Any third party agency needs to void of political or business bias. From all the respondents’ answers, there is no one group that is designated for this purpose and no clear path for increasing the credibility of the information. From the **elected** side, this is where the state agency is probably good in cooperation with local emergency management, third party supporters and watch dog groups. **Emergency management** officials believe that information from



local government and the WUTC along with pipeline companies is the most credible, and that communication from a variety of stakeholders is more credible.

Local planners and engineers feel that information has to be reliable and verified by and independent source. They see first responders and local government officials as the communicators. Credibility would only be assured by third party corroboration.

Prevention/dig safely officials feel that information must come from a credible source like a partnership between pipeline companies and a regulatory agency (a joint announcement would be the best way to disseminate information). They also feel that credible information can best be presented by communicating real life examples.

Pipeline safety officials say the information must be from a truthful source. The best delivery source would be a third party pipeline industry expert. Yet, half of the pipeline safety officials interviewed felt that there is nothing that can be done to increase the credibility of the information. **Pipeline company** officials added that their own communications are always suspect, so they favor information from a regulatory body. To counter this, they must tell the facts truthfully. In contrast, they also said that they feel that they are the most appropriate group to disseminate the information however. The **media** believes that pipeline companies are circumspect and that only years of great performance would provide credibility for anyone communicating with the public.

Q. G. -- For the most part, **citizens** respondents believe that local communities should be involved in deciding what information to communicate and when. So do **elected officials** and **emergency management** officials, but they shouldn't take the lead.

Local planners and engineers said local communities have to play an equal role with other stakeholders in the process including pipeline companies as well as state and federal regulators. **Prevention/dig safely** respondents felt that each community should play a role as a member of the state Emergency Response Commission and Local Emergency Planning Council. **Pipeline safety** officials said that each community should have a role and they should decide on that role by coordinating with other stakeholders. For the most part, **pipeline company** officials are uncertain about the role of individual communities.