

**Golden Triangle Business Roundtable  
Minutes  
November 21, 2006**

Walter Almon called the meeting to order and welcomed members, guests, plant managers, and local government representatives.

**Committee Reports:**

Pat recognized PBC for winning the Southeast Louisiana Construction Users Council award and Triple "S" Industrial Corporation won the National CURT safety award.

**Pat reported that the Safety Committee** is still in the process of critiquing the Safety Awards process and changes that will be made to the audit process. They are re-designing their mission. The safety meetings in 2007 will be designed for educating area contractors and plant personnel. They will share best practices and will announce a month in advance what items will be brought to the committee so that company representatives can make arrangements to attend.

**George Talbert reported on environmental and research.** George reported that Lamar is still looking for an industrial partner to make ethanol in this area. If interested please contact him. George plugged Lamar's engineering continuing education program. A class is coming up in February on heat exchangers; please add it to your calendars.

**Walter Almon reported that the Construction Industry Institute Committee** met and their focus has shifted a little. Getting qualified crafts people into the area has always been a priority. They have been working with the Texas Workforce Commission to improve on acquiring qualified workers for the area. They have made some good step change improvements by working together. They are also working with the schools and channeling school curriculums to include the crafts.

**The Workforce Initiative Committee, chaired by Jim Griffith** reported that the workforce and housing initiative committee has two functions. One is trying to address the need for craftsmen for ten billion dollars worth of projects. Also addressing the challenge for housing for those workers. They have met with local educational institutions and see some success with Port Neches Groves and Nederland schools. Some students will spend the afternoon portion of their school day at ABC learning a craft. This will help them become employable right after graduation. Jim stated that he would be meeting with a Port Neches Groves parents group to discuss crafts education and how students can have successful careers by pursuing a craft or crafts. Dr. Szuch of Lamar Institute of Technology reported that they have a program aligned with Local 195 Pipefitters and will be doing some training on a two year program.

On the housing issues a lot of awareness has been generated. Jim stated that individuals or groups interested in housing should go through the local Chambers of Commerce to develop projects. They are getting organized for the trip to Austin for Austin Days. They want to have a message for the legislators concerning housing and educational issues. School administrators have their hands tied concerning what programs they can offer their students and meet regulations.

John Durkay gave the legal report for Texas. The process for bills is ready to begin when the Texas Legislature resumes their session. Some attitudinal changes are on the horizon and we will have to wait to see how it plays out. Nationally you've got a lame duck Congress but some bills may pass. Some issue is being raised about the possibility of dividing chemical security and it's a good possibility that will occur in the next congress.

In the next Congress the Chemical Security Bill's chances are greatly increased. It is hoped that we can maintain the present ISTC background screening that is in place.

Budget/Membership shows that we have several new members since August 1, 2006. Walter welcomed the new companies.

James Riley reported for the program committee. They will have a meeting in December to make some final preparations for speakers in 2007. James stated that January 16, 2007 is our traditional Plant Managers Panel.

**Program:**

**Captain Ellen Warner reported that the Sabine Pilots are a private entity commissioned by the governor of Texas, with 29 pilots at present to cover the waterways. They serve the ports of Beaumont, Port Arthur and Orange and Sabine Pass. The waterway they serve is sixty-five miles long serving fifty-five terminals. They are looking at three LNG terminals on the waterway. The last time the waterway was improved was in 1966. By 2010 the waterway will have over 4200 vessels traveling it per year. Captain Warner hopes that the problems will be alleviated with a deepening and widening project.**

**To improve movement on the waterways we have to improve and expand. The question was asked who would fund the improvements. The answer was the area, industry and the government.**

**Captain Thomas Sparks spoke about the Coast Guard informing us that it began in 1790 with a distinctive blend of humanitarian, law enforcement, diplomatic and military capabilities. The lighthouse, steamboat inspection, and the bureau of navigation services are what make up the Coast Guard today. They have continued to grow by Congress adding new agencies. They are now with the Department of Homeland Security. Their strength lies with their people and they have 39,000 serving active duty and 8100 reservist. They also have auxiliary persons who volunteer their time and get paid for their gasoline. The Coast Guard has planes, boats, ships and cutters. They are flexible and can meet the needs of any assignment. They want to increase their outreach. They can't inspect every single vessel that enters our ports so they want to be smart. Alien migrants always begin in search and rescue cases and then have to be returned to their countries.**

**Fisheries is a critical economic industry and very dangerous. They look after 110,000 fishing vessels. They enforce maritime laws. They can inspect any vessel in the US. They are very judicious in the use of this privilege so as not to lose it. Search and rescue is their premiere mission and one they are most proud. They respond to roughly 40,000 calls per year. They were indirectly involved with rescuing 32,000 people during Hurricane Katrina. Their aircraft were responsible for most of the rescues. The Coast Guard reached out internationally well in advance of 911 to secure their support. They have icebreakers and utilize them in the Atlantic. They cover 361 ports and the vessels that enter them. They have special cells to look at the impact of closing a waterway should that take place. They are in Iraq at present. They board vessels to enforce embargos and secure ports. The Army pays for half of their operations. The coming LNG will create an explosion of waterway traffic. It is critically important to keep the waterways open.**

Walter reminded the members that our January 16, 2007 meeting is a panel of plant managers and asked that they make plans to attend and arrive early because it is well attended.

Meeting Adjourned 12:30 PM