



NEWS From -

Conference of Professional Operators for Response Towing

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News from the Spring Towing Safety Advisory Committee (TSAC) Meeting



Tina Cardone, Executive Director, C-PORT (Conference of Professional Operators for Response Towing) and Joe Frohnhoefer, C-PORT Director and TSAC member attended the Spring 2011 TSAC Meeting held in Memphis, TN on June 15-June 16, 2011. The Towing Safety Advisory Committee (TSAC) serves to advise the Secretary of Transportation, via



the Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, on matters relating to shallow-draft inland and coastal waterway navigation and towing safety. TSAC's membership includes participants from the barge and towing industry; the mineral and oil supply vessel industry; port districts, authorities or terminal operators; maritime labor; shippers and the general public. USCG Commander Patrick Clark, Designated Federal Officer, announced at the meeting that this would be his last meeting in that capacity. Cardone explained, "CDR Clark will be serving in Iraq this fall. His contributions to the committee have been great and he will be missed." The committee echoed this sentiment and all wished the Commander a safe journey.

The committee has been working on many projects, all in various stages of completion. These regulatory projects include towing vessel inspections, a new licensing scheme to allow for mariners to enhance their career choices, barge and bridge lighting resolutions focused on boating safety, and others. "We understand that both vessel inspections and the new licensing scheme are due to be published in the Federal Register soon," Cardone remarked. "Once published as a Proposed Rulemaking, the committee will be able to diligently continue their work on these important tasks." Frohnhoefer joined Cardone in stating that the group has much work to do and he with C-PORT stand ready to contribute.

Other presentations at the meeting included US Coast Guard National Maritime Center's (NMC) update with a focus on the new Medical Form. They stressed that the key to successfully completing the process is "prevention and control". Dr. Gillis, heading the medical review processing at NMC stated that the positions that touch public safety are the most sensitive. Standards of care for these individuals must be at current acceptable medical standards and the conditions must be controlled. Supporting data is essential for the smooth processing of these credentials. The website is being updated to assist mariners through this process.

The USCG Towing Vessel National Center of Expertise also presented an update on their facility. This facility is responsible for the vessel inspections and is growing to be prepared for the final regulations when they come online. The center is located at Paducah, KY. Pat Lee, National Program Coordinator explained the Towing Vessel



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Bridging Program (TVBP) is progressing well. Phase I is underway and focuses on Outreach and Education. It involves industry volunteering to have Coast Guard examine and inspect their vessels. Those towing vessels currently required to be inspected are done so according to current regulatory standards. Those currently classified as uninspected towing vessels, predominately those in the assistance towing industry, are examined as no current regulations apply. "This is likely to change with the new vessel inspection rule," remarked Cardone.



At the conclusion of the first day, Southern Towing, based in Memphis, hosted a reception at the Rooftop at the Madison Hotel. The committee and guests enjoyed the views of the Mississippi River and the city while discussing the day's events and industry business in general. A tug and barge moved through the river and passed under the bridge just before sunset.

The next TSAC meeting is slated for mid October 2011 at a location to be determined. It is anticipated that the workgroups will meet prior to the public meeting and be ready to discuss and make recommendations regarding their projects, in particular the vessel inspection program, at that time.

C-PORT was founded in 1985 to act as a liaison between the marine assistance industry and public agencies and organizations involved with boating safety, marine assistance, marine salvage and other marine-related operations. The association was created in part to afford a means of cooperation with the government in matters of national concern; to provide an objective, self-regulating body for the marine assistance industry; and to promote, through legislative, regulatory, and governmental initiatives, the maintenance and expansion of the marine assistance industry. For more information on this meeting or C-PORT, contact Tina Cardone, Executive Director, C-PORT at (954) 261-2012, or email to tcardone@cport.us, or visit www.cport.us.