



## **NEWS** From -

### Conference of Professional Operators for Response Towing

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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#### **Will Towing Safety Advisory Committee (TSAC) Cease to Exist?**

Tina Cardone, Executive Director, C-PORT (Conference of Professional Operators for Response Towing) and Joe Frohnhoefer, C-PORT Director and TSAC member attended the Fall 2010 TSAC Meeting held in Pittsburgh, PA on September 1- September 2, 2010. 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. Cardone commented, "USCG Commander Pat Clark announced at the meeting that Congress has not yet renewed TSAC's charter. As a result, TSAC will cease to exist at the end of this month." The committee members were taken aback by this revelation and inquired what could be done to change it.

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. "The exchange of information from the towing industry to the Coast Guard in this type of setting is invaluable," Cardone remarked. Frohnhoefer joined Cardone in stating that the group has much work to do and it must be permitted to continue. In an effort to insure the continuation of the committee in the event Congress does not extend the charter, Commander Clark stated that the Coast Guard is circulating a new charter within the department that will make TSAC a discretionary committee. He remarked there are no guarantees this charter will be accepted. Clark also explained that the main difference between the two types of committees is a statutory committee is created by an act of Congress and a discretionary committee is created by the department. After a period of questions and answers, the committee members were in agreement that the best course of action was for members of industry to ask Congress to keep TSAC's charter and statutory authority.

Other announcements at the meeting included the presentation of the US Coast Guard Meritorious Public Service Award to Roy Murphy, a long-standing member of TSAC and former training manager, Kirby Corporation. Mr. Murphy stepped down as a TSAC member in March 2010 in order to accept a position at the US Coast Guard Towing Vessel National Center of Expertise. The Meritorious Public Service Award is given to recognize unusual courage in advancing a Coast Guard mission; substantial contribution to the Coast Guard that produced tangible results; or specific individual accomplishments that provide unique benefits to the public.

At the conclusion of the first day, the Port of Pittsburgh Commission hosted a reception for



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TSAC onboard *Explorer*, managed by RiverQuest, a non-profit educational organization that operates a river learning center for students, teachers and the community of Southwestern Pennsylvania. *Explorer*, a Coast Guard inspected vessel, is one of the world's first green passenger vessels, and "features a hybrid diesel-electric engine system that is projected to reduce emissions by a significant amount as compared to the older vessels of the fleet" ([www.riverquest.org](http://www.riverquest.org)).

The TSAC public meeting was held on Thursday, September 2 with presentations from the USCG National Maritime Center and the US Coast Guard Towing Vessel National Center of Expertise. US Coast Guard Office of Investigations and Analysis provided insight into the *M/V Elizabeth M*, the towboat that washed over the Montgomery Locks and Dam and sank on the Ohio River in January 2005. Four crewmembers lost their lives that day. A towboat operator who transits the area commented after the presentation that there have been changes to the operation of vessels in those locks to hopefully help prevent such a casualty from happening in the future. This tragic event held special significance to many in the audience as it happened in the immediate area.

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, contact C-PORT at (954) 261-2012 or visit [www.cport.us](http://www.cport.us).