Is Meaningful Public Awareness on the Horizon? Can you divorce Public Awareness from Public Engagement?

Pipeline Safety Trust Conference
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Shift?: Focus on Stakeholder Responsibilities

• The current approach to PA is producing diminishing returns.
• Communities have a responsibility to act on public awareness information, but they’re not required to.
• You can lead a horse to water, but you can’t make it drink... Or can you? It depends on the horse.
• Can we develop and implement a regulation that requires some Public Awareness stakeholders to act on the PA information they receive?
  – Example: Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act requires communities to act when in receipt of information about chemical facilities.
  – Example: Improved damage prevention law enforcement
Who Do You Trust?

• Trust is fundamental to engagement.

• Trust is relative. Stakeholder audiences often trust their own, not “others”.
  – Do stakeholders trust the federal government? Do stakeholders trust pipeline operators?
  – Emergency responders trust emergency responders; excavators trust excavators; neighbors trust neighbors.

• Efforts like the Pipeline Emergency Responder Initiatives (PERI) can help to overcome trust issues.

• Another example: The Common Ground Alliance is a critical organization for advancing excavation safety advocacy.
Consolidated Messages vs. Operator-Specific Messages

• Information overload is a real problem for some stakeholder audiences.
  – Example: Emergency responders often get the same information from multiple operators.

• There are common messages that apply to all operators. Those can be consolidated and delivered in a standard way.

• Consolidation will free pipeline operators and stakeholder audiences to focus on system-specific messages that are critically important to communities.

• Operators must feel confident that regulators will accept this approach. Failure to address this will stifle creativity and limit operators’ options to improve Public Awareness.
Engagement... On What??

• PHMSA’s Public Awareness regulations have a narrow focus – pipeline safety for existing pipelines.
• Public Awareness regulations do not address siting, climate change, keep-it-in-the-ground, “not in my backyard”, and a host of other pipeline-related public concerns.
• What is the proper role of regulation with regard to encouraging public engagement?
Who Engages, and Why?

• Does Public Awareness information encourage engagement? Yes, sometimes, but…
• The desire to engage is often driven by things that have nothing to do with Public Awareness information:
  – Incident/tragedy
  – Connection to a place
  – Health concerns
  – Proposed regulation that impacts landowners or businesses
• How can we better engage in these instances?
• Can Public Awareness regulations and programs adequately address these concerns?
What’s Next for PHMSA?

• Using the Public Awareness SWOT report and other sources of input, we are evaluating elements of Public Awareness that are appropriate for regulatory changes.

• We are evaluating activities like PERI and other approaches that could constitute compliance for operators while better serving the needs of stakeholder audiences.

• We are engaging with the American Petroleum Institute on the 3rd edition of RP 1162.
  – We are driving transparency in this process.
  – We are committed to addressing stakeholder concerns – through regulation – that are not addressed in RP 1162.
Thank You

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