



Safe Pipelines

A Publication of the Pipeline Safety Trust
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Mission of the Trust

The Pipeline Safety Trust promotes fuel transportation safety through education and advocacy, by increasing access to information, and by building partnerships with residents, safety advocates, government, and industry, that result in safer communities and a healthier environment.

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Reauthorization - An Opportunity for Greater Safety

BY CARL WEIMER

Every four years the U.S. Congress goes through the process to review and reauthorize the Department of Transportation's Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA). This includes a variety of hearings in different committees in both the Senate and House of Representatives meant to provide oversight of how well the agency has performed the previous four years, whether they have implemented the directives of Congress, and to hear from a variety of stakeholders about any needed changes. The reauthorization process is scheduled to take place this year, and the House has already held one hearing.



We have worked with a handful of people across the country to come up with our "hit list" for this year's reauthorization. The initial list included over 20 ideas, which we have narrowed to the priorities discussed below. Let us know if you think we have missed a major potential improvement.

Expanding the miles of pipelines that fall under the Integrity Management rules -

Currently about 44% of hazardous liquid pipelines and only 7% of natural gas transmission pipelines are required to ever do testing (mainly using smart

If you would like to learn more about these findings visit: <http://primis.phmsa.dot.gov/meetings/MtgHome.mtg?mtg=58&nocache=5323>

The Pipeline Safety Trust has been honored to be an independent voice for public safety in the past two cycles of reauthorization, and we testified at the recent hearing in the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee in late May. The reauthorization process forces us to step back, review the data and events of the past couple of years, and come up with a list of ways to increase safety even further. While it is easy to grumble about the industry or its regulators, it is more difficult to draft clear, fully supported proposals that provide Congress ideas for change.

The Trust's recent testimony to the House can be downloaded at: <http://pstrust.org/library/docs/PipelineSafetyTrustTestimony.pdf>

pigs) to assess the integrity of these pipelines. What this means in real terms is that if you live near a pipeline in a more rural area the safety of that pipeline is not regularly checked and verified, and you are at a higher

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Reauthorization

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risk. This does not seem right to us and we think all pipelines should be inspected at some point, and required to verify problems found.

Increase PHMSA's authority for inspections when pipelines are being constructed –

About a year ago, PHMSA held a special workshop to go over the numerous problems they found during 35 inspections of pipelines under construction. These inspections found significant problems with the pipe coating, the pipe itself, the welding, the excavation methods, the testing, etc. PHMSA's findings and stories we have heard from people across the country, call into question the current system of inspections for the construction of new pipelines. PHMSA has the authority to inspect pipelines as they are being constructed, but it is unclear whether they are doing this at the levels needed. There also is a significant disconnect between the process that goes on to review the siting of new pipelines, and the safety pieces that should be a part of this same process (spill response plans, permit waivers, determination of High Consequence Areas). We will ask Congress to correct these problems to ensure pipelines are well inspected and that the public is completely involved during this critical construction stage.

Continued implementation and funding for Technical Assistance Grants to communities –

Over the past year PHMSA has started the implementation of the Community Technical Assistance Grant program that we pushed for as part of the 2002 reauthorization. Under this program more than a million dollars of grant money was made available to communities across the country that wanted to learn more about the pipelines that surround them.

Ongoing funding for these grants is not clear, so we will be asking Congress to ensure their continuation to help involve those most at risk if something goes wrong with a pipeline understand more about them.

Inspection Transparency –

Over the past few reauthorization cycles PHMSA has done a good job of providing increased transparency for many aspects of pipeline safety.

They have significantly upgraded their incident data availability and accuracy. They have made pipeline maps available, and devoted a large part of their website to allowing us to track enforcement actions related to specific pipelines and incidents. The one major piece that is still missing is a system so people can see when the pipelines in their area were last inspected, what the inspections were for, what the results were and any needed improvements required.

Better Damage Prevention (Call

To learn about this grant program and the type of projects the first year of grants has funded visit: <http://www.pstrust.org/resources/stats/TAGGrants.htm>

Before You Dig) Programs at the State Level –

One of the leading causes of pipeline incidents is damage caused by excavation. Congress has pushed PHMSA, and PHMSA has pushed the states to improve programs to decrease such excavation damage. We support this push and would like to see some exemptions to these programs (local municipalities, state Departments of Transportation, railroads) that exist in some states removed. We also would like to see a mandatory reporting system for such incidents required so the effectiveness of these programs can be well targeted.

Meaningful public awareness programs –

Finally, pipeline companies have been required for a few years to provide public awareness outreach to a variety of stakeholders (excavators, emergency responders, public officials, and those living near pipelines). We have been disappointed in some of these efforts as they are farmed out to the lowest cost contractors to meet the letter of the requirement instead of the intent of the requirement. Recently the National Transportation Safety Board cited the failure of these programs in the investigation report of a deadly pipeline explosion in Mississippi. This year, the pipeline companies are supposed to report on the methods and progress they have made instituting and measuring these programs. PHMSA is planning a one day workshop in June to discuss this implementation. We will ask Congress to require better reporting and evaluation of these programs. ■

2009 Conference Recap

The Trust's fourth annual Pipeline Safety Conference in New Orleans last November wasn't like Mardi Gras. Still, in-depth accounts of community projects to be carried out with federal technical assistance grants were a hit with conference attendees.

Over two days, more than 100 people from industry, government and citizen groups learned about PHMSA-funded local community projects stretching from Alaska to Florida. Kicking off the confab were four of the Trust's directors—a former Congressional staffer, a Florida county commissioner, a former director of Washington State's pipeline safety program, and an Oregon rancher with a pipeline running through his property. Each gave his perspective on why involving the public is important to pipeline safety.

The theme of the conference was "Pipeline Safety—What Local Communities Want to Know" which brought in greater numbers of public attendees and participants than in previous years. As a result, many of the first day's sessions were given over to public education topics: representatives from industry, government and the Trust dis-



Jeff Wiese, Associate Administrator for Pipeline Safety at PHMSA

cussed available information about pipelines and pipeline safety that's available, where to find it, and who can provide assistance on technical questions.

Of particular interest to everyone was the afternoon session on the Pipelines and Informed Planning Alliance (PIPA) a broad spectrum of stakeholders to address pipeline siting issues in communities undergoing

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2009 Conference Recap

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rapid population growth. PIPA is in the final stages of adopting a set of recommended land use practices for proposed development near existing pipelines. Threaded throughout the day—and the next—were presentations by community groups and municipalities awarded PHMSA grants.

“Split Estate,” a newly-released and controversial documentary about the public health and environmental impacts of gas drilling in Colorado, was an eye-opening start to the second day’s activities. Nor were the flames of controversy dampened during a panel discussion of the impacts of gas drilling operations in Barnett Shale (Texas) with the mayor of DISH, Texas (“home” to 19 gas pipelines, 11 compressor stations and three monitoring stations within its two square mile borders), a Fort Worth, Texas goat rancher and artisan cheese maker who had commissioned an air quality study, and a highly regarded environmental scientist.

Closing the conference was a panel of representatives from eastern Pennsylvania and Fort Worth speaking about the local pipeline safety concerns that caused them to apply for a PHMSA grant. They discussed the grant activities they would be undertaking and how their projects would help their communities better understand and address pipeline safety issues.

Since its inception in 2006, the Trust’s Pipeline Safety Conference has been a unique forum—a place where the entire pipeline safety community can share information, ideas, and viewpoints in a low-key environment. However, the increased presence of community group and local government representatives at last year’s conference resulted in especially enriching presentations, informal discussions, and networking opportunities for all who attended.

Planning for this year’s Pipeline Safety Conference is underway. See the article on page 7 for more information.

Editor’s Note: The 2009 conference agenda, speakers’ biographies, and Power Point presentations are available on-line at <http://www.pstrust.org/conference/2009conference.htm>. Although the conference was recorded, the sessions are unavailable for viewing due to technical problems. ■



The Smart Pig

SMARTPIG@PSTRUST.ORG

In pipeline parlance, a smart pig is a high-tech device designed to root around inside pipelines. These intelligent little beasts inspect every square inch of the line, calling attention to any needed repairs.

I try to do the same thing for our readers. Send me a question and I’ll root through the labyrinths of modern pipeline prevarications to get you the best answer piggily possible: the straight scoop, as we say back in the sty.

Editor’s Note: The views and opinions expressed by this pig do not necessarily reflect those of The Pipeline Safety Trust, or any human being

Dear Smart Pig,

I live in a suburb of St. Paul, Minnesota and I have been hearing a great deal about gas in our sewer lines. While gas in a sewer line may be normal, especially after eating bean salad, this seems to be a concern about a different type of gas. What is going on and should I be worried?

Tina Lockley, Minnesota

Dear Mrs. Lockley,

While I rarely partake in a bean salad, I can understand your concern over gas and sewer lines being mixed. Many natural gas service lines installed across the country in recent decades, have been installed using “trenchless” boring, in which utility lines are laid underground without disruptive -- and costly -- excavation.

Unfortunately older clay sewer lines or even plastic sewer lines are difficult to locate and without a clear location this boring or drilling technique is powerful enough to drill right through the middle of the sewer line leaving a smaller natural gas line in the middle of a sewer pipe. This is referred to as a cross bore. When an unsuspecting plumber puts an auger in the sewer to clear a clog, the auger may break the natural gas line allowing gas to flow through the sewer line into the house causing an explosion.

In February 2010, there was an explosion at

a house in St. Paul, MN. It was caused when a contractor using an auger to clear the sewer line at the residence ruptured a plastic gas line that had been accidentally installed through the pipe in 1991 by Xcel Energy. The workman suffered first-degree burns in the ensuing explosion and fire.

The ensuing fury over the accident caused the Minnesota Office of Pipeline Safety to threaten Xcel Energy that unless they presented and implemented a plan to fix all the mislaid pipe, they would face a \$1 million fine. That would pay for a lot of bean salad, and some coleslaw on the side!

In response, Xcel Energy began inspecting every unchecked Xcel customer in the St. Paul area, over 50,000 inspections in all. They aim to have them completed by summer 2012.

State Fire Marshall Jerry Rosendahl said that they are looking into launching similar programs with the other 40 gas distribution systems in the state.

The cities of Cincinnati, Ohio and Lexington, Kentucky, recently launched similar programs. But Minnesota’s would be the biggest and the first statewide re-examination of what is now considered a state-of-the-art method for laying gas pipe, wire and other underground utilities.

Greater attention to prevent cross bores would be an important step towards making all utility lines safer. Since you live in an area known to have this problem, make sure your plumber checks with the local utility to see if your line has been checked before using an auger to clear any clogs.

Hope that brings you up to speed!

-Smart Pig ■



Trust Moves Ahead on PHMSA Technical Assistance Grant (TAG) Projects

Editor's Note: Since the middle of 2009, the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) has awarded two rounds of federal grants to help local governments and citizens groups obtain technical expertise to address community pipeline safety concerns. A third round of grant awards may be announced this June or July.

In the second round, awarded in September, the Pipeline Safety Trust received a \$47,250 grant to determine effective communications strategies that would get local public officials proactively involved in addressing pipeline safety issues. The Trust also is a key partner in a \$50,000 grant awarded to the Association of Washington Cities to improve land use planning and permitting practices in the vicinity of transmission pipelines. Lastly, the Fort Worth (Texas) League of Neighborhoods has asked the Trust to be a technical advisor for its PHMSA-funded project: obtaining information and raising community awareness about pipeline safety issues. Here's a report on the Trust's progress with these grants.

The Trust's Communications Grant

Using marketing principles for social rather than commercial purposes (commonly called "social marketing"), the Trust will be creating a model education and outreach plan targeted at local public officials. Though the plan will make them aware about pipelines in the community, its ultimate goal is to persuade them to act to protect the community and the pipelines before a pipeline fails.

As its technical expert, the Trust selected Applied Research Northwest (ARN), a Bellingham, Washington social sciences research firm. ARN staff will interview and survey local public officials in selected communities, develop the program's elements, hold focus groups to get feedback and finally write an outreach plan, which will be distributed nationally.

In early January, ARN's CEO, Dr. Pamela Jull, facilitated the initial meeting of the project's Protocol Advisory Group (PAG). The PAG is composed of Matt Admot, a Whatcom County (WA) planner; Jim Doherty, an attorney and consultant with the Municipal Research and Services Center (MRSC), Seattle; Andrea Grover, the Stakeholder Outreach director for Spectra Energy, Houston, Texas; Stan Snapp, a Bellingham city councilman and retired fire fighter; and Carl Weimer, the Trust's executive director.

During the meeting, the PAG identified the local officials to be targeted—elected officials (councils, mayors), and planning directors and their staffs. The group also specified the program's behavioral goal: to have local officials adopt a Consultation Zone ordinance, which would require developers to consult with pipeline operators when a development is proposed in the vicinity of an existing pipeline. The PAG has developed a draft marketing plan and will work to expand it.

The Trust and ARN have now selected the two communities in which ARN will conduct its initial interviews to identify the barriers to success and possible incentives that can overcome the barriers. One is Benton County, Washington which has a population of about 165,000 and includes the cities of Richland and Kennewick. Benton County has a somewhat greater awareness of pipeline issues because one of its long time county commissioners was the chairman of the Washington State Citizens Committee on Pipeline Safety and introduced pipeline safety ideas to many in local government. The other is Ada County Idaho which has a population of about 380,000 and includes Boise.

Once the initial interviews are done a more in-depth web-based survey will be prepared and distributed to local government planning directors throughout the State of Washington. The results of the survey and some additional focus groups will be used to prepare a final marketing plan for promoting Consultation Zones to local government.

AWC's Planning and Pipelines Grant

Ironically, the Trust plays a bigger role in this grant than its own: it is one of two organizations providing free

technical assistance to local governments in Washington State for land use planning in the vicinity of pipelines. The other organization is the Municipal Research and Services Center (MRSC), a non-profit that provides information and legal advice to county and city governments in the state of Washington.

The focus of this project is on Washington municipalities experiencing rapid population growth in the vicinity of existing hazardous liquid and gas transmission pipelines. Most components of the project, however, should be useful to local officials anywhere in the country who are grappling with land use issues around pipelines.

One project goal is to make public officials in these areas aware of the land use practices recommended by the Pipelines and Informed Planning Alliance (PIPA). These PIPA practices are designed to protect the integrity of a pipeline from the impacts of proposed residential and commercial developments, as well as to minimize the risks to the public should the pipeline fail. Another project goal is to provide these officials with no-cost technical assistance so they can adopt those PIPA practices that best address the circumstances and needs of their communities.

Late in 2009, MRSC launched a web site—Planning Near Pipelines—with a wide array of resources for local governments anywhere that are concerned about the co-existence of developments and pipelines. (The link to this web site is <http://mrsc.org/subjects/pubsafe/transpipes.aspx>.) Among the materials on this site are a discussion about the importance of proactive land use planning; PIPA's recommended practices, including commentary on using each of these guidelines; and sample land use ordinances adopted by municipalities in Washington State and across the nation. (The development of one of these ordinances—Brookings County, South Dakota's Transmission Pipeline Risk Reduction Overlay District—was funded by another PHMSA technical assistance grant.)

The Trust has established and is hosting another online resource: the Planning Near Pipelines discussion list. Anyone can join this list by signing up at <http://www.pstrust.org/discuss/index.htm>.

MRSC and the Trust also are providing "real time" technical assistance to Washington local government officials. MRSC's Jim Doherty and the Trust's Carl Weimer have been making presentations to municipalities and regional forums of state-wide planning organizations. (These presentations—in both Power Point and Adobe Acrobat formats—are on the Planning Near Pipelines homepage.) Once local officials decide to move ahead with adopting one or more of the PIPA practices, Jim and Carl will be available to provide consulting services that range from providing background information and statistics to assisting in the drafting of an ordinance.

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(TAG) Projects

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The Fort Worth League of Neighborhoods' Project

The City of Fort Worth—situated in the “sweet spot” of the Barnett Shale, one of the largest sources of natural gas in the United States—is a hotbed of drilling operations and the League is greatly concerned about these impacts of these activities on the urban environment. The League’s project is to undertake a series of activities that will lead to the production of a “State of Gas Pipelines in Fort Worth” report.

The League is hiring technical and policy advisors to identify the locations of pipelines within the city; ascertain the risks these pipelines pose and how to best educate the public about them; evaluate the effectiveness of the city’s current regulatory regime for pipelines; and make recommendations for incorporating land use planning for pipelines into the City’s gas drilling procedures.

Trust staff already has suggested improvements to the City’s pipeline ordinance and Carl Weimer, the Trust’s executive director did a site visit in early April.

“In future issues of *Safe Pipelines*, we’ll give you updates on these and other grants where the Trust is providing technical assistance. ■

The Trust Hires New Program Assistant

With the departure of Marissa Rosati Cool to have her second child, the Trust has hired Riley Sweeney to assist with the day-to-day activities of the Pipeline Safety Trust. In addition to aiding the executive director with running the office, he is keeping the website fresh and updated, and expanding the Trust’s online presence (see *Marrying the Trust to the Digital Age* article for more on that).

Prior to joining the Trust, Riley was a political organizer. He managed Catherine Chambers’ campaign for Bellingham City Council and was the Kitsap field director for Congressman Norm Dicks in 2008. A Western Washington University graduate, he earned his degree in Communication

and Political Science. He paid his way through college by working as a fundraiser for student scholarships. Before that, he produced a Community Television show in his hometown of Olympia for two years. He currently lives in Bellingham with his partner Bryna Hoffmeister, and in his spare time produces the 1930s style radio drama titled *Bellingham Terror!* ■



The Pipeline Safety Trust Needs Your Support

At a time when tens of thousands of miles of pipelines are aging, pipeline operators are cutting costs, and new pipelines are being proposed to meet the nation’s energy demands, urban and rural communities have a great and unmet need for pipeline safety information.

With your help, we can continue to

- Assist in the aftermath of a tragedy
- Provide information about pipeline risks and property rights
- Work with communities to prevent and resolve conflicts between existing

pipelines and growing populations

- Contract with technical experts to review industry practices

But with a small staff and budget, the Trust has to make difficult choices about where its resources can best serve the public interest in advancing the cause of pipeline safety.

In short, the Trust intends to expand our pipeline safety activities—not curtail them, and we need your help to do this.

How You Can Help

Make a tax-deductible donation to the Trust today! You can donate online at www.pstrust.org/donate.htm ■

Marrying the Trust to the Digital Age

Are you interested in pipeline safety and want to get the information now? Don’t worry, the Pipeline Safety Trust has you covered. We have been expanding our forays into the digital world so that you can keep up to date on all the breaking pipeline news.

Something Old

SAFE Pipelines is an email discussion group we maintain. Join more than 375 people nationwide as they share pipeline safety and pipeline siting information with community activists, government officials and pipeline experts. It is our hope that through this sharing, initiatives to make pipelines safer will be adopted and citizens across the nation will be given a larger role in the oversight of pipeline safety and pipeline siting. To join, go to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/safepipelines/> OR you can join by sending a blank email to safepipelines-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

LNG Safety is an email discussion

group dedicated to sharing Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) safety and siting information among community activists, regulators, government legislators and industry experts. Over 300 share their thoughts and ideas on the best available science, technologies and risk assessment when it comes to LNG facilities. To join go to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/LNG-safety/> OR you can join by sending a blank email to LNGsafety-suscribe@yahoogroups.com

Something New

The Pipeline Safety Trust website (www.pstrust.org) has been expanding in the last couple of months with the addition of state-based web pages. Washington, Oregon, Louisiana, Kentucky, New Jersey and Iowa have personalized web pages with information pertinent to the state. Keep an eye out, Texas will be live in the next couple of weeks. Each state page has contact in-

formation for the regulators in that state, a complete list of all pipeline companies operating there and its own news stream of the latest news. To put your state on the list for its own state web page, send Riley Sweeney an email at riley@pstrust.org.

Something Borrowed

It’s important to stay on top of breaking news stories, so on our main website, we will keep the biggest pipeline safety news stories updated weekly for you. Just look in the box “Pipelines in the News” and you will be able to link to news stories all over the nation.

Something Blue

The Pipeline Safety Trust is now on Facebook! If you have an account, login and search “Pipeline Safety Trust.” Become a fan today and get updates right to your newsfeed. You can also become a fan by clicking the button on our website. ■

CCOPS Saved from the Chopping Block

Thanks to the efforts of the Pipeline Safety Trust and others, Washington State legislators rejected Governor Chris Gregoire's recommendation to abolish the Citizens Committee on Pipeline Safety (CCOPS) during this year's regular and special legislative sessions. CCOPS was just one of the 78 statutory committees, boards, councils and commissions on the "hit list" drawn up by the governor's staff to show her commitment to effective and efficient government.



Governor Christine Gregoire

The governor's proposals were contained in House Bill (HB) 2617 and its "companion," Senate Bill (SB) 6426. As soon as HB 2617 was scheduled for a hearing before the House State Government and Tribal Affairs (SGTA) Committee, CCOPS supporters began a letter and e-mail campaign to members of this committee, as well as other legislators, urging CCOPS be removed from this bill.

This effort paid off immediately. Literally minutes before Bob Archey, CCOPS chair, and Dick Goldsmith, the Trust's program director, were to testify at the House hearing on January 21st, they were told that the outpouring of support for CCOPS led to its removal from HB 2617. Two weeks later, the Senate Ways and Means Committee took the same action on SB 6426.

When the governor recommends termination or consolidation of an entity, she is required by law to consider eight factors. These include whether the entity has completed its work and is no longer of critical significance to effective state government; whether the group's work affects public safety, welfare or health; whether the work can be done by another state agency; and the impact termination will have on costs.

Had the governor's staff carefully evaluated CCOPS, it's difficult to understand how CCOPS could have been proposed for abolishment. CCOPS has a broad and on-going mandate: "to advise the state agencies and other appropriate federal and local government agencies on matters relating to hazardous liquid and gas pipeline safety, routing, construction, operation and maintenance." The cost of CCOPS is borne by fees on pipeline operators and amounts to less than \$19,000 a year.

Furthermore, its pipeline safety efforts within the state have been significant. CCOPS was instrumental in obtaining more funding for the state's pipeline safety program; it has been working to strengthen Washington's "One Call" law; and has reviewed specific pipeline failures, remedial proposals, and regulatory responses.

Abolishing CCOPS also would have had a profound impact on pipeline safety efforts in other states across the country and at the federal level. The Pipeline Safety Improvement Act of 2002 requires the U.S. Secretary of Transportation to respond to recommendations for pipeline safety improvements made by a governor-appointed advisory committee. CCOPS is the only advisory committee of this kind in the nation and the federal government has given careful consideration to its concerns and views on pipeline safety issues. Among the issues addressed by CCOPS have been integrity management, regulation of gas distribution pipelines, "One Call," and the training of control room personnel. Currently CCOPS is actively involved in minimizing public health risks and pipeline failures through its participation in the Pipelines and Informed Planning Alliance (PIPA) and efforts within Washington to implement PIPA's recommended land use practices.

In a letter to House SGTA Committee Chairman Sam Hunt, Trust Executive Director Carl Weimer, wrote "CCOPS has an impressive record of accomplishments and perhaps its greatest has been bringing together citizens, local governments, the pipeline industry and regulators, who have created a culture of pipeline safety in the state through the strong relations they developed on CCOPS."

Richard Kuprewicz, a pipeline safety expert and the president of Accufacts, drove home this point in his letter to Chairman Hunt noting that CCOPS "is the best forum to ensure that the public's concern about ...[new] pipelines are aired and considered by regulators and the industry before siting decisions are made." His letter also neatly summarized the views of those wanting to keep CCOPS: its abolishment "would provide no benefits and would, in fact, result in increased risks to the public, more burdens on the regulators, and less productive interaction between the public and the pipeline industry." ■

Digital Copy

Mark your calendars, the Pipeline Safety Trust will be holding yet another unique pipeline safety conference November 4th and 5th, 2010. What makes this event unique is the mix of representatives from the affected public, the pipeline industry, and government regulators. The conference is an opportunity for all to come together and discuss barriers to safer pipelines. Through this collaborative approach, the Trust hopes to promote better understanding and trust between these groups, so we can all move forward together in our mutual goal of making pipelines as safe as possible. Like last year, the conference will be held in the historic, family-owned Hotel Monteleone located in the French Quarter of New Orleans.

Planning is underway as we line-up speakers, arrange panels and accommodations. Stay tuned for more information on how you can be part of this great event. You can find information and presentations from our previous conferences at our website

<http://www.pstrust.org/conference/index.htm> ■

Pipeline Safety Conference November 4th and 5th, 2010

