

CENTER FOR NUCLEAR WASTE REGULATORY ANALYSES

TRIP REPORT

SUBJECT: 28th Annual American Society for Quality Energy & Environmental Division 2001
National Conference
Project Number 20.01402.158

DATE/PLACE: August 26-29, 2001
Richmond, Virginia

AUTHOR: Bruce Mabrito

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PERSONS PRESENT: This conference was attended by approximately 100 individuals. T. Trbovich of SwRI QA was the 2001 Conference Chairman and J. Boyd of the SwRI Chemistry and Chemical Engineering Division also attended. Mr. Wilkins R. Smith of the U.S. NRC was present.

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF TRIP:

The purpose of the trip was to attend the 28th Annual ASQ EED 2001 National Conference as part of professional development. It provided an opportunity to interface with several DOE HLW-program individuals, learn about the status of several new regulatory and recommended quality and environmental programs, and bring information back that may affect the CNWRA quality system.

SUMMARY OF PERTINENT POINTS:

This conference was moderately well attended, although the attendance has dropped off from earlier years, primarily because the U.S. nuclear utilities are not as vigorously supporting the ASQ EED programs as they used to. Generally, there were two tracks of programs following the Executive Panel discussions. Several of the more pertinent presentations will be discussed here. Quality and environment regulatory systems were discussed relative to the Department of Defense, the Environmental Protection Agency, DOE National Labs, commercial nuclear power plant organizations, the Tennessee Valley Authority, the U.S. Corps of Engineers, private organizations, etc. Separate from this report, a package of the presentation viewgraphs will be circulated to CNWRA management, SwRI QA, SwRI Safety Department, and the SwRI Staff Development Office. The integration of the quality and environmental management systems was the primary connecting thread woven throughout this conference; SwRI is involved in that process.

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES:

Throughout this ASQ EED conference, one of the underlying themes was the "Plan - Do - Check - Act" circular approach to both the quality and environmental programs. This approach incorporates methods to provide continual improvement while meeting the compliance aspects of regulatory programs.

In the Executive Panel on Government Agencies, the representatives from the EPA, DOD, and NASA discussed their respective approaches to environmental and quality systems. William Garvey, serving as chair of the Executive Order (EO) 13148 Interagency Environmental Leadership Workgroup responsible for implementation of the "greening government through leadership in environmental management at the EPA," stressed that "source reduction, rather than treatment" is the EPA focus and their regulations are now moving in that direction. Maureen Sullivan, responsible for the U.S. Department of Defense Environmental Pollution Prevention and Compliance Programs, emphasized the "tooth-to-tail ratio" that is guiding the DOD as they try to upgrade their fighting capability. The DOD has 8,000 staff members in the business of environmental planning, inspection, compliance, remediation, and other ESOH (Environmental, Safety, and Occupational Health) functions. The DOD is very interested in adequate and thorough root cause analysis of various environmental situations and reducing the overhead costs associated with ESOH. Ms. Sullivan gave the web site address for the DOD ESOH, www.denix.osd.mil and encouraged organizations interested in DOD progress to check that site. As an aside, she said that DOD is using this performance-based approach to contracting: "we won't tell you how to do your business, but we will specify performance." Olga Dominguez, the Director of the Environmental Management Division for NASA spoke on the ISO 14000 baseline and gap analysis being performed at the NASA sites. She stated that ISO 14000 embraces the entire facility in an Environmental Management System, where as the quality management system ISO 9001 is limited and directed in scope at NASA.

In the session focused on Quality and Environmental, Health, and Safety Success Stories at the U.S. DOE facilities using ISO 14000 and an Environmental Management System, it was stated that the term "continuous improvement" should not be used in such description manuals, but more accurately should be phrased "continual improvement," which would include both "ups and downs" as progress is made. Most everyone agreed that by stating "continuous improvement," one is asking for failure because not every initiative or measurement period will show continuous improvement. John Kerns of URS-Aqua Services, stated that although an organization's conversion to ISO 14000 generally causes the perception of a company to "go up," the main benefit is a great reduction of material waste and effort inside the organization. He also stated that the average cost to implement an ISO 14000 system is about \$100,000, but I suspect that he was referring to the costs billed by his company to the organization; total costs are likely much higher.

In the session entitled Quality and Environmental Management Systems at Government Research and Development Labs, Jeff Long of the Quality Services Oak Ridge National Laboratory, made a presentation on "Establishing a Performance-Based Management Program." He admitted that ORNL is in their first year of performance-based management operations and they really have not made the full conversion. The definition they use for performance-based management is "a systematic approach to performance improvement through an ongoing process of establishing strategic performance objectives; measuring performance; collecting, analyzing, reviewing, and reporting performance data; and using that data to drive performance improvement." With 3,600 full time staff members at ORNL in 15 different directorates, there are some parallels with SwRI, however clearly the final report is not yet in on this approach. The shorthand version of this is that under the "old system" at ORNL, there was no flow down of strategic objectives and no integration of lessons learned, feedback, internal audits, science and technology reviews, etc. The new system is supposed to include planning, assessment, evaluation and feedback. This is affected at the very top by the DOE having an agreement with the President of the U.S., called the Secretary's Performance Agreement, with the flow down going to the DOE Strategic Plan (which includes national goals and strategy), the DOE R&D Portfolios (includes mission objectives and R&D programs), Roadmaps (a detailed "path forward"), a Lab System Capability Profile (the linkage of Lab capabilities to DOE mission needs), with

Institution Plans (the roles of the individual DOE labs), tied to Performance-Based Contracts (that are the DOE HQ agreements with the Labs). It is entirely too early to claim success on this management approach at ORNL.

One of the best presentations was given by Loretta Marino Sanford, who spoke on "Facilitating Learning" and addressed the training issues. This was presented by a skilled trainer who stressed that "learning is a change in behavior; if our objectives are to facilitate learning, then we must identify the actual behavior we want to promote or change." From the quality Environmental, Health and Safety training standpoint, the objective can be as simple as stopping chemicals from being poured down a drain. While the objective is simple, the process to achieve this objective is not. Ms. Sanford stressed that "Learning is a complex process." She listed the learning factors as motivation, stimulation, comprehension, integration and attitude change. She also listed "concrete learners" (those needing detailed information, data builds to a conclusion, step by step, sequential order, standard methods, specific life examples, deductive reasoning, likes agenda and specific instructions, thinking in words, etc.) versus "conceptual learners" (those needing global schemes and concepts, see patterns in data, random-order mind-mapping, new methodologies, analogies, metaphors, inductive reasoning, disliking agenda and specific instructions, thinking in images, etc.). Ms. Sanford stated that her personal favorite training person is "Bill Nye, The Science Guy," who has done work for Disney and the National Science Foundation. Nye, she said, rolls altogether the best characteristics of training that cause attitude change. That attitude change was described as cognitive (the way a person thinks, the logical and rational thinking part of the attitude), affective (the way a person feels about the attitude, including values and beliefs), behaviors (how the person actually behaves in relation to the attitude), and behavior intentions (how a person intends to behave in future circumstances).

Larry English, of Information Impact International, gave a presentation on Integrating Information Quality into Energy, Environment, and Health and Safety Programs. Information quality is defined as "consistently meeting knowledge work and end-customer expectations through information and information services." Although he violated one of the basic rules of defining a phrase, he did provide good quality guidelines for data capture: (i) design information create screens and forms to be intuitive; (ii) assure data capture is at the most natural place; (iii) capture data electronically and automate if possible; (iv) calibrate automated data capture and assure accuracy and no loss; (v) capture data by information producer if it cannot be captured electronically; (vi) implement Information Quality (IQ) software and quality edits at the source; (vii) "error proof" handwritten data collections; (viii) capture all data to minimize assumptions; (ix) minimize "data entry" keystrokes, use check boxes; (x) verify accuracy of electronic-captured data regularly; (xi) repeat vital information given verbally; (xii) don't assume you know the correct spelling, confirm it; (xiii) don't automatically use default spell check options, proof it for context; (xiv) assure scanned data with a quality control process; (xv) capture and maintain historical data; and (xvi) capture attributes for customers that do not change. Specifically for scientific data capture guidelines, English stressed the following: collect electronically if possible; assure calibration accuracy and precision of measure instruments; design data collection forms and screens intuitively in the way information is collected; measure and compare data as soon as possible, in the event re-sampling is required; capture all data for downstream knowledge workers, not just the immediate ones; identify and describe all variables that could cause bias; and conduct quality assurance verification before destroying samples, original data or instrument readings that cannot be re-created. English made use of information supplied by the Software Engineering Institute and in the general sense emphasized that "quality, accuracy and completeness of data, configuration, and control of information" is the ultimate goal.

Tom Kartachak, of the U.S. Army Chemical Demilitarization Program at the Aberdeen Proving Ground in Maryland, spoke about the Efficient Facilities Initiative (EFI, formally termed BRAC) which is aiming to close, consolidate and/or combine U.S. military bases to reduce 20-25% of the excess infrastructure. "Military readiness," naturally, get funded first, but there is now "new money" for clean up of ex-military sites so there is not direct competition for "tanks, bullets, etc." The Secretary of Defense is to provide recommendations to a commission in March 2003 as to which bases are to be closed, consolidated or combined. The President must act on those recommendations in July 2003. Kartachak also spoke on the Performance Based Services Acquisition (PBSA) and stated that the DOD goal is to (i) have measurable outcomes; (ii) a DOD policy to maximize performance, innovation and competition at lower cost; (iii) have PBSA in affect in a year for 50% of the service acquisitions; and (iv) ensure that PBSA training and tools are provided. As part of his talk, Kartachak mentioned that they are always looking for better, faster, less expensive ways to detect metals (munitions, metal containers, etc.) under the ground in their business (possible area of interest for magnetometer work?).

Dr. Harvey Dove, now working for Navarro Research and Engineering, Inc. on the Yucca Mountain Program, presented a paper on "Model Validation: Confidence Building in a Perfect Storm," which described the validation of a site specific computer model. He emphasized the concept of "validation" and the concept of a "model." Dove characterized the goodness of a computer model as how well it represents a specific site. He stated the term "validate" does signify legitimacy and validation does build confidence. The software computer code GENII-S was discussed and a deficiency report had been written about two years ago on this PNL code for lack of validation. The solution for some software codes is for measurement comparisons in the field and the laboratory to be made, with multiple lines of evidence, peer review, use of other models, and corroborating data utilized, according to Dove. In the case of GENII-S, extensive review was used, biosphere dose conversion factors were checked, and an international peer review, through the IAEA, was accomplished. This is a lengthy process and not an easy one. Dove said that although the IAEA made suggestions to improve the code, they did not give it a "thumbs down." He claimed this was a success story.

CONCLUSIONS:

Overall, this conference was beneficial because it provided an opportunity to receive updated information on the progress of quality and environmental systems used at U.S. government agencies and other organizations. It allowed good networking on an informal basis with DOE and other staff working at DOE National Labs and on the YMP.

PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED:

None.

PENDING ACTIONS:

None.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

This conference need not be attended by CNWRA staff on an annual basis since there is seldom such rapid progress in the quality and environmental systems areas. Attendance, based on the sessions offered and speakers presenting, is more appropriate than committing to regular, annual registration in this conference.

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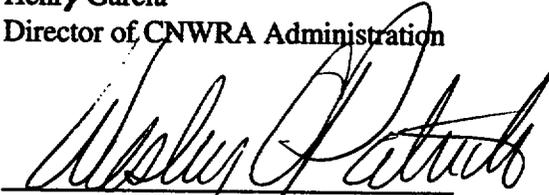
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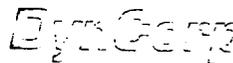
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