

WM Symposia WM2010 Conference Panel Report

PANEL SESSIONS 20 & 21

General Introduction

Session 20 was designed to be the first of a two-part panel that would focus on achieving excellence in health and safety. The first Panel (20) took a global perspective with speakers representing DOE's VPP Program, the NNSA, a DOE prime contractor, and a UK-based organization. The second Panel (21) looked at safety from a more worker-related level. Speakers for this session represented four prime DOE contractors as well as DOE's Carlsbad Field Office.

PANEL SESSION 20 - New Directions in Safety & Health from a Global/Enterprise Perspective

Co-Chairs: Judith Connell, *Fluor Government Group (USA)*

Joseph Yanek, *Fluor Government Group, (USA)*

Reporter: Judy Connell

Panelists in the order of their presentations are given below.

1. Dave Jackson, *Chair, Voluntary Protection Program Participants' Association (VPPPA);*
2. Chris Evans, *Executive Director, HSE, Fluor Corporation;*
3. Frank Russo, *Senior Advisor, ES&H, NNSA;*
4. Brent Rankin, *Exec. VP & COO, Idaho Cleanup Project.*

Dave Jackson opened this session by discussing the VPPPA and its role in supporting DOE's Voluntary Protection Program for safety. VPP is a safety-focused program modeled after an OSHA program. VPP is an employee-driven initiative to improve and sustain a strong safety culture. DOE adopted VPP in 1994 and the Department of Defense adopted the program in 2007. There are 32 VPP sites in the DOE Complex and 31 in the Department of Defense. Fifteen NASA contractors hold VPP Stars. Organizations embracing VPP typically have safety records that are 50% better than industry norms. Many sectors benefit from VPP: employers and employees, unions, industries, local communities and the economy.

Chris Evans gave a perspective on the United Kingdom's approach and European Union legislation for maintaining a strong safety culture, citing the "Duty of Care" and legal compliance. Duty of Care is a legal concept that outlines and defines employee health and safety. It presumes that individuals and organizations have legal obligations to act toward others and the public in a prudent and cautious manner to avoid the risk of reasonably foreseeable injury to others. The UK passed the *Health and Safety Act* in 1974. The HSE Executive enforces this Act as well as others relevant to the working environment. Other Acts in the UK related to Health and Safety are the *Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act of 2007* that focuses on larger firms (fines are seldom less than £500,000) and the *Health and Safety Offenses Act of 2008* that focuses on individuals (fines of £5,000-20,000 and a term of 12 months' imprisonment).

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Frank Russo, a senior executive with the National Nuclear Security Administration, acknowledged that overall the safety stats for DOE projects are going in the right direction because the principles of integrated safety management are being embraced and workers are engaged in the process through VPP. He emphasized that that safety is, and must be, a core value, not a priority. Why? Because priorities change! Russo also encouraged the audience to really look at the types, not just the frequency of incidents or recordable accidents. For example, 2% of the recordables on DOE sites involve motor vehicle accidents, but account for 50% of the fatalities. To drive his point home, Russo quipped, “Use your operating experience OR become it!”

Brent Rankin honed in on worker involvement. He spoke about behavioral safety and its relationship to worker involvement. He asked the question, “What drives workers to want to be a part of safety?” It’s when something becomes personal and workers feel ownership. He talked about the worker-driven safety communications programs at the Idaho Cleanup Project that integrate multiple videos with employee actors encouraging fellow employees to work safely. For example, there are 11 videos that are “take offs” on popular shows or entertainers such as Rod Sterling’s *Twilight Zone* or the *Beatles*, highlighting ways to avoid various injuries: hands, eyes, slips, trips, and falls. Rankin’s parting words were, “Structure things around employee teams – it’s an investment that will ‘snowball.’”

PANEL SESSION 21: The Role of Executive Leadership in Developing and Maintaining a Strong Safety Culture

Co-Chairs: William Murphie, *US DOE*;

Joseph Yanek, *Fluor Government Group (USA)*

Reporter: Judith Connell, *Fluor Government Group*

Panelists in the order of their presentations are given below.

1. Garry Flowers, *President & CEO, Savannah River Nuclear Solutions*;
2. Ray Skwarek, *Director, SH&QA, Washington Closure Hanford*;
3. Greg Meyer, *VP, Environmental & Nuclear, Fluor Government Group (formerly Pres. & GM of B&W Pantex)*;
4. Roy Schepens, *VP, Infrastructure and Technology group, Parsons*;
5. George Basabilvaso, *Director, Regulatory Compliance, DOE Carlsbad Field Office*.

Garry Flowers’ presentation focused on two areas: the past safety performance at the portion of Savannah River Site that the Fluor-led Savannah River Nuclear Solutions team assumed responsibility for in August 2008; the current and future actions to reinforce a strong safety culture that has experienced some recent “lapses.” Flowers showed some impressive statistics, noting that the construction activities at SRNS stand at a national record of 23 million safe work hours with the last lost work day in June 1998 and that the Savannah River National Laboratory is “DOE’s safest lab.” He also spoke about the nitric acid spill and the arc flash injury that occurred in August and September 2009, respectively and the resultant in-field reviews and third-party assessments that were conducted and are continuing to improve the safety culture.

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Ray Skwarek directed his presentation to helping subcontractors achieve an effective safety culture, highlighting the approach used by Washington Closure Hanford (WCH). After briefly describing WCH's role at Hanford and their goal to subcontract at least 60% of all work (current number is 71% subcontracted with 94% going to small business), he went on to discuss the hazards at Hanford and the importance of subcontractors' working safely at Site. He stressed the importance of communications, and the role that the Integrated Safety Management System, an Integrated Work Control Program, and Disciplined Operations play in a complete and employee-focused/owned safety program. Skwarek also gave examples of the various types of training that WCH provides.

Greg Meyer briefly described the mission of PANTEX, explaining that the 25-square mile site has 3,200 employees – half of whom are union represented. He went to say that because of the materials the site handles and the importance of its mission to U.S. Security, PANTEX has no choice but to be a high-reliability organization (HRO). He then noted the attributes of an HRO and PANTEX's core values and principles. The basic premise for safety: all injuries are preventable and safety and compliance must be built in up front. He, like the other panelists, emphasized the importance of worker engagement and empowerment, and stressed that “safe and compliant” applies to all work – regardless of who performs it. Meyers endorsed Stephen Covey's 8th Habit, “The most important thing, is to keep the most important thing;” especially as to relates to safety. He encouraged the audience and his colleagues to focus on the “systems accident” rather than the individual accident because that's how you can prevent a potentially catastrophic event.

Roy Schepens opened his remarks saying that a “safety culture resides with the *overall* culture of an organization.” He spoke about instilling a safety culture and gave examples of concrete and visible actions, such as: invest in safety training and leadership development, assure that programs are visible and empowered, and transition from mitigative to proactive measures. Schepens also reinforced Meyer's comments about high-reliability organizations and highlighted the importance of senior managers in setting the example and demonstrating safety leadership in the field. In closing, he noted that “zero” accidents is a goal that can be reached and that building a strong culture is never completed.

George Basabilvaso's presentation focused on establishing an effective safety culture in a DOE Field Office Environment. He listed and then described each the five dimensions of the safety culture at DOE's Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP): just, flexible, informed, reporting, and learning. In agreeing with his fellow panelists about the role of senior managers in safety, Basabilvaso also commented that the workforce as well as management must eat, sleep and breathe safety. He pointed out that at WIPP, safety is a condition of employment and the site's safety philosophy embraces the fact that all injuries are preventable.