INTERNATIONAL SPILL CONTROL ORGANIZATION

ISCO NEWSLETTER

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IMO OPRC-HNS TECHNICAL GROUP MEETING IN LONDON LAST WEEK

The 9th meeting of the OPRC-HNS Technical Group (TG9) which ended on Friday 10th July was attended by delegations from 23 countries and 10 other organizations. Over the five days of the TG9 meeting delegates addressed a wide agenda of marine oil and HNS pollution related issues and agreed a report that will be submitted to the Marine Pollution Environment Committee (MEPC) this week. TG9 Chairman, Mr Nick Quinn (New Zealand) and Vice-Chairman, Mr Suh Woo Rack (Republic of Korea) were re-elected for the coming year.

ISCO's efforts in collating information relating to the response to HNS incidents and to sub-sea oil recovery operations were acknowledged in the meeting report and the ISCO delegation has been asked to continue this work.

At this week's MEPC meeting ISCO will be represented by Dr Douglas Cormack who will present a paper on "The Independent Training and Accreditation of Private Oil and HNS Spill Response Contractors".

IMO: UGANDA IS 169th IMO MEMBER STATE

Uganda has become the latest Member of IMO, following the deposit, on 30 June 2009, of an instrument of acceptance of the Convention on the International Maritime Organization, as amended, with the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

USA: ASA TO SPONSOR "WRECKS OF THE WORLD: HIDDEN RISKS OF THE DEEP"

The American Salvage Association (ASA), supported by the Association of Diving Contractors International (ADCI), International Salvage Union (ISU), Marine Technology Society (MTS), North American Marine Environmental Protection Association (NAMEPA), Spill Control Association of America (SCAA), and the World Ocean Council (WOC), will sponsor a conference, ***"Wrecks of the World: Hidden Risks of the Deep (WOW)"*** on Wednesday, September 9, 2009 at the Maritime Institute of Technology and Graduate Studies (MITAGS) in the Washington, DC area (Linthicum Heights, MD) USA.

The conference, part of the ASA-supported Wreck Oil Removal Program (WORP), will explore the myriad issues (pollution threat, impact modeling, risk assessment, oil removal and remediation, implications to the environment, legal, insurance and funding issues, next steps) related to the more than 8,500 sunken vessels in the world, many of them World War II-era.

By way of background, these wrecks may contain as much as 20 million tons of oil and other hazardous materials. Sporadic or continuous leakages or potential sudden massive spillages from these wrecks pose a continual risk across the globe. The problem of potentially-polluting wrecks has long been discussed and recent incidents around the world have caused government agencies and responsible parties to look proactively at preventing catastrophic oil and other chemical releases from long submerged shipwrecks.

The risk of oil and other hazardous materials seeping out of sunken shipwrecks is growing yearly, and the likelihood of leakage or even a massive spill occurring increases, as do the potential costs. Taking a proactive rather than a reactive approach to mitigating this risk will

save not only dollars in response costs, but also reduce the threat of environmental and socioeconomic damages.

Read more: http://www.maritime-executive.com/article/asa-sponsor-wrecks-world-hidden-risks-deep/

USA: SUPREME COURT RULES AGAINST CHEVRON

June 30, 2009 - The U.S. Supreme Court rejected an appeal by Chevron Corp., the second-largest U.S. energy company, in a fight with the Ecuadorean government over potentially tens of billions of dollars in liability for environmental damage. The justices, without comment, today let stand a lower court ruling that blocked Chevron's effort to force arbitration with state-owned PetroEcuador. Chevron contended that a 1965 joint operating agreement requires PetroEcuador to pay a share of any award in a pending environmental lawsuit against the U.S. company. A court-appointed expert has recommended that Chevron be forced to pay more than $27 billion. Chevron has denied wrongdoing. PetroEcuador and the Ecuadorean government contended in court papers that the state-owned company isn't bound by the 1965 accord, signed by two private companies including one that is now part of Chevron. PetroEcuador became a partner in the operations in the 1970s and took them over in 1992. Chevron is based in San Ramon, California. The case is ChevronTexaco v. Texaco Petroleum, 08-1123. http://www.chron.com/disp/story.mpl/business/6502582.html [Thanks to Don Johnson of DG & Hazmat Group]

DISPERSANT EFFECTIVENESS TESTS IN LOW-DOSES AND REPEAT APPLICATIONS

During the Dispersant Effectiveness Tests in Low-Doses and Repeat Applications, an oil slick was applied to the water and the main bridge was moved over the slick as dispersant was applied in a low dose. Researchers waited a few minutes; then applied another low dose of dispersant.

Many studies, verified by well documented field experience, have provided a greater level of acceptability for the use of chemical dispersants to mitigate waterborne oil spills. In an on-going multi-research program funded by the Minerals Management Service (MMS) and conducted by SL Ross Environmental Research, Ltd., a week long test was conducted at Ohmsett in May to evaluate dispersant effectiveness in low-dose, repeated applications. The usual practice for the application of dispersant to large oil spills is through large fixed wing aircraft spraying. However, typical spray rates provide for an application ratio of 1:20 dispersant to oil, as applied to a slick thickness of about 0.15 mm. Nevertheless, thick oil patches accounting for 80 to 90 % of the total oil volume can easily be10 to 100 times thicker than this. The application rate of dispersant from an aircraft hitting oil of this thickness could be in the range of only about 1:200 to 1:2000. The question to be answered in this project is: could multiple low dose applications of dispersant over time achieve an effective dispersion?

The project was conducted at two test scales. The initial test was completed at the laboratory scale test tank operated by SL Ross Environmental Research Ltd. in Ottawa, Canada. These efforts were intended to assess the effect of low, repeated dose applications of dispersant on a number of oils.Once trends were determined, testing was conducted at Ohmsett to verify similar behavior at simulated sea-scale.

The research at Ohmsett was to determine if dispersant applied in very low doses (1:1000 to 1:200) will disperse a small fraction of an oil that is known to be amenable to dispersion, or is it simply ineffective until a minimum threshold concentration of dispersant is achieved, possibly through multiple, low-dose applications. In order to do this, researchers had to

simulate the way aircraft would apply the dispersant. For this project, Ohmsett staff changed the configuration of the dispersant spray bar's spacing and nozzle angles to simulate the way the aircraft passes over a slick. An oil slick was applied to the water and the main bridge was moved over the slick as dispersant was applied in a low dose. Researchers waited a few minutes for observation and to obtain a representative wave set; then applied another low dose of dispersant.

Various crude oils were used during testing at the Ohmsett Facility. They included Endicott and ANS, both from the Alaskan North Slope, and Rock Crude. An intermediate fuel oil, IFO 180, was also tested. The dispersant employed during testing was Corexit 9500, which is well known to the industry. Analysis of the data is still being conducted and should provide a better understanding of dispersant effectiveness in low doses and repeat applications. A final report will be submitted to MMS and will be made available on their web site http://www.mms.gov/tarphome

COPING WITH A TOXIC WORLD

There are some 80,000 man-made chemicals in the industrial environment, but only a handful of them - lead, mercury manganese, acrylamide, organophosphates, heavy metals and organic solvents - have been fully tested for potential health risks.

Prof. Donald Fox (left) of Houston and Prof. Yoram Finkelstein of Jerusalem. Photo: Judy Siegel-Itzkovich

The realization that chemicals can damage the central nervous system is not very old, so there are not many specialists with extensive knowledge of both neurology and toxicology. Eighty of these interdisciplinary experts from 16 countries, including the US, Israel, Nigeria, Japan, Estonia, Poland, Spain, Italy, the UK, India and France met last month at the Kibbutz Ma'aleh Hahamisha Guest House outside Jerusalem to discuss the latest discoveries in the field. Few of the foreign participants had ever been here. Read more - http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1246443715764&pagename=JPost%2FJPArticle%2FShowFull

UK: TREAT YOURSELF: TINY OIL TANKER SIMULATOR COSTS $245K

If you have ever wanted to know what it feels like to pilot a hulking oil tanker without the risk of destroying pristine Alaskan beaches, then why not treat yourself to a tiny version that supposedly handles just like the real thing.

The tiny ships are used in the UK's Warsash Maritime Academy to train tanker captains. They cost $245,000 and are powered by electric motors.

According to Matt Sicard, a trainee pilot "They realistically mimic the movements of a supertanker but on a gentler scale, which makes them ideal for learning on. While the price might sound steep, the consequences of someone going wrong in the real thing are often immeasurable, so here's hoping that prospective captains get as much realistic practice as possible." http://www.uberreview.com/2009/06/treat-yourself-tiny-oil-tanker-simulator-costs-245k.htm [Thanks to Don Johnston of DG & Hazmat Group for forwarding this story]

TECHNOLOGY: SOIL WASHING PLANTS FOR LAND REMEDIATION

Soil washing is a proven technique employed in many site remediation projects. Ground material from contaminated sites may contain heavy metals, organic solvents, etc., resulting from leakage or spills during industrial activity sometime in the past. The technique consists of physical and/or chemical processes that allow the separation of particle agglomerates and removal of the contaminants often contained within. The manufacturer claims that this technique is the only one that solves all the problems related to land remediation with an industrial approach achieving desired results within a scheduled period.

Contaminants tend to concentrate in agglomerates of fine particles, which can be highly absorbent for their weight due to their large specific surface area. The particles are separated using various wet processes during which intensive washing takes place. The clean material is classified according to particle size with the finest fraction dewatered using a GHT filterpress.

More info - http://www.diemme-spa.com/filtration/_vti_g2_1639_copy_aspx_rpstry_20

USA: HAZMAT SYNERGY: WORKING SMARTER DURING TOUGH TIMES

The Virginia Association of Hazardous Materials Response Specialists (VAHMRS), in conjunction with the Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM), is proud to announce the 26th Annual Virginia Hazardous Materials Conference and Expo to be held October 19-23, 2009 at the Hampton Roads Convention Center and Embassy Suites Hotel.

More information and registration is available at www.virginiahazmat.org

USA: CREWS LEARN ABOUT DANGEROUS LEAKS WITH CHEMICAL RAIL CARS

Trains carrying chemicals and other hazardous materials make their way through Mid-Michigan every day. Today in Midland, some local firefighters and emergency responders are learning how to respond if one of those trains has an accident. This training is being put on by Dow Chemical and TRANSCAER. The goal is to give emergency responders hands-on training so they are prepared in case of a real emergency. Eight rail cars are involved. One of the cars is rigged to leak water and compressed air from control valves. Later today, emergency responders will learn how to stop those kinds of leaks. Most of the other cars are hands-on training devices as well. There are also a couple of classroom cars. Nearly 30 firefighters will undergo today's specialty training today, but that's just the beginning. This Safety Train will be on site through July, with several other Mid-Michigan fire departments and rescue crews scheduled to take part in the training. The train then heads to Ludington after its time here. Trainer Rollie Shook work for Dow Chemical. He tells us this kind of training builds confidence. "We actually get them on top of the railcars, and for some, that's the first time they've ever been there. And that certainly isn't what they want to do in case there's an emergency," he said. "They want to have spent some time up there, utilized the equipment and techniques they need to be aware of so they can do it properly in case there is an actual incident." This Safety Train has only been in use for three years, but already Dow and TRANSCAER have been able to train 1,500 emergency responders around the country. The training is free to the departments who take part.
http://abclocal.go.com/wjrt/story?section=news/local&id=6902635 [Thanks to Don Johnson of DG & Hazmat Group for this lead]