

Mid-America Regional Quality Steering Committee

TASK STATEMENT

January 28, 2010

I. TASK TITLE

Advancing Our Partnership – Capitalizing on the Opportunity to Achieve the Eighth Coast Guard District’s and the Barge Industry’s Common Vision of Inland River Transportation

II. BACKGROUND

In November 2006 and March 2007, leaders of the inland barge industry, the River Industry Executive Task Force (RIETF), RADM Joel Whitehead, Commander of the Eighth Coast Guard District, and senior staff of the Eighth Coast Guard District met to discuss advancing the relationship between the Eighth District and the barge industry.

Those meetings produced a very important result – a common vision of inland river transportation. The Eighth District and the industry agreed that this common vision begins with a mutual commitment to achieving a single, fundamental goal – an inland marine transportation system that is safe, secure and environmentally sound. Explicit in this common vision is the goal of facilitating commerce to enhance a healthy industry. The Eighth District and industry further agreed that to achieve the vision, it is necessary to build, improve and maintain a Coast Guard-industry relationship characterized by trust and mutual respect and marked by open communication at all levels between industry and Coast Guard personnel. It is particularly important to note that those involved in the discussions share the view that the vision, goals, and relationship must be sustained and transcend future industry and Coast Guard personnel changes.

To achieve this common vision, the Eighth District and industry determined that it is necessary to set up a working group of appropriate government and industry personnel via the Mid-America Regional Quality Steering Committee (RQSC) to consider how our common vision can be translated into a more effective working relationship.

III. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Since this task statement was originally written in mid-2007, the industry-Coast Guard partnership improved immensely under the leadership of RADM Joel Whitehead and continues to improve under RADM Mary Landry. However, the current structure of the relationship does not ensure that our common vision is one that will be sustained and which will transcend future industry and Coast Guard personnel changes.

In 2009, the Bridging and Implementation Team (BAIT) developed a training program to enhance future Coast Guard inspectors' familiarity with the industry in order to ease the transition to the forthcoming towing vessel inspection regulation. Therefore, the original purpose of the QAT, to develop a program to maintain a relationship that is characterized by trust and mutual respect, has been overtaken by events. In response, the QAT was revised; the purpose of the QAT now is to list and harmonize past and current orientation programs and other events, such as Sector Luncheons, that facilitate building and improving the industry-Coast Guard relationship.

IV. TASK

Establish a working group, comprised of industry and Eighth District personnel, via the RQSC, to develop a list of industry-Coast Guard programs and events that increase familiarity and communication between the partnership. Specifically, the working group would perform the following tasks:

- a. Catalogue all current and/or previous activities that are essential to maintain the relationship, including
 - i. Regular meetings between Coast Guard and industry personnel with a commitment to open communication and trusting relationships at all levels.
 - ii. Orientation and education for industry personnel to gain increased understanding of Coast Guard operations with a specific eye toward Eighth District security, casualty and waterways management concerns.
 - iii. Orientation and education of Coast Guard personnel in industry operations and safety programs and goals. (The group will review programs already underway such as the BAIT program and the Eighth District's Towing Vessel Rider Program for Investigation Officers to assess effectiveness and, if deemed valuable to the partnership, to ensure continuity as personnel rotates.)
 - iv. Risk-based decision-making for deployment of Coast Guard inspectors, achieved through accumulation of relevant facts and data. (This group will utilize the RQSC Quality Action Team

[QAT] outcomes of the “Analysis of Eighth Coast Guard District Casualty Data.”)

- v. Comity among the Coast Guard Sectors within the Eighth District and between the Eighth and Ninth Districts achieved through clearly defined policy letters and consistent application and execution of District policy.
- b. List any other elements needed or any aspects of the elements above that need to be modified.
- c. Ensure that the elements identified in Sections a and b are harmonized.
- d. Identify any resources necessary to implement and sustain the programs.
- e. Identify other parties that may benefit from participation in the programs and events (Ninth District).

ESTIMATED TIME TO COMPLETE TASK

The QAT will meet in late 2009 to discuss accomplishing Section a and establish a timeline for completing the tasks. The goal of the working group will be to develop and present the initial report to the full RQSC during its meeting in January 2010. The QAT will provide a report for final approval by June 2010.

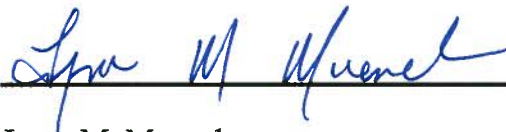
V. RQSC CONTACTS

Eighth District Contact: CAPT Tom Hooper

Industry Contact: Lynn M. Muench



CAPT Tom Hooper
Eighth U.S. Coast Guard District
January 28, 2010



Lynn M. Muench
American Waterways Operators
January 28, 2010