A Community Relations Model

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Sea dumped Conference
Overview

• Development of the Community Relations Model
  – History of Community Relations
  – Definition of success
  – Positive and negative project impacts

• Presentation of the Model
  – Six principles of Community Relations
  – Key Tools
  – Lessons Learned
  – Success factors
  – Summary of tools and benefits
The first approach to Community Relations was based on the EPA model

- Data heavy
- No system/vehicle for soliciting and collecting public inputs
- Reactive community involvement
The model progressed...

- Still data heavy
- Solicited community inputs but we didn’t integrate them into project decision making
- One model for all communities
- Involvement post field work
Today’s Community Relations Model

• Dynamic information exchange
• Community-sensitive activities and communication
• Active and responsive listening
• Communities stakeholders are integrated into each aspect of the project
This presentation will describe the Community Relations Model that is being applied in U.S. with success
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Reduced Risks
This presentation will describe the Community Relations Model that is being applied in U.S. with success.
The Community Relations Model success can be seen through benefits to the community and governing agency.

**Clear Benefits to the Community**
- Reduced risk
- Clean environment
- Protection of property values
- Confidence in government and project
- Some agenda items met

**Clear Benefits to the governing agency**
- Reduced project costs
- Shortened schedules with improved certainty
- Positive public and community image
- Rapid and full receipt of Right of Entry
Effective community involvement reduces cost and schedule for Site Remediation

- **Positive Impacts**
  - Full characterize of the site
  - Alignment of community and project objectives
  - Provides ideas and resources for improving project cost and schedule performance
  - Builds constituency supportive of project funding and agency commitments
  - Positive project image multiplies community support
Effective community involvement reduces cost and schedule for Site Remediation

- **Negative Impacts**
  - Slow down or stop project execution
  - Uncooperative landowners, civic leaders, and business owners increase project costs
  - Combative legal filings
  - Lack of constituency support reduces project priority and funding
  - Failure to identify critical past and future land use and contamination activities
  - Uninformed community results in potential for safety and contamination exposures
Community Relations Model
Six Principles of Successful Community Relations

1.) Establish and commit to a project message(s)
   – Example:
     The number one goal of this project is to reduce the risk of munitions exposure to community members and site users in a timely manner within the budget we have available.

Value: Ensures clarity within the community
Six Principles of Successful Community Relations

2.) Speak with one voice
   – Every team member echoes the same message, policies, and approach.
   – All written materials reflect the same information and vernacular.

Value: Continuity within the community
Six Principles of Successful Community Relations

3.) Have a dedicated Community Relations point of contact
   – Serves as liaison between technical experts and the community
   – Should be an individual with which the community can identify

**Value:** Establishes trust-based relationship
Six Principles of Successful Community Relations

4.) Apply the Risk Communication Model
   – Understand your audience
     • Identify potential issues
     • Identify potential agendas
   – Listen twice as much as you speak
   – Avoid jargon and streamline technical data
   – Show empathy
   – Maintain continuity of team points of contact

**Value:** Responds to the Human Psychology of Risk
Six Principles of Successful Community Relations

5.) Provide multiple and regular communication methods

- You should cater to the audience not assume how they receive information.
- Saturate them with information that is tailored to them.

Value: People respond best with they are well informed
Six Principles of Successful Community Relations

6.) Have an exit strategy
   – Projects will have an impact on the community. Have an exit strategy for completion of the project and a contingency strategy should funding be withdrawn.

**Value:** They will remember best what you do last
The Community Relations Model has two key tools: Technical Project Planning Process and Community Relations Plan

- These tools are the primary components of community involvement and are field-proven
  - The early involvement identifies critical opportunities, constraints, and information
  - More productive (stakeholder ownership of project objectives and dynamic participation)
The Technical Project Planning Process effectively identifies and incorporates stakeholders and regulators in project planning

- Identifies all stakeholders that have an interest and/or influence over a project
- Identifies competing or conflicting stakeholder project interests
- Improves alignment of project and community objectives
- Determines minimum data quality objectives for meeting community priorities
- Establishes an agreed upon site close-out goals based on future land uses
Technical Project Planning Process is successful when key stakeholders and regulators are effectively engaged in advance of project start-up

- Proactively identifies and addresses potential conflicts to avoid costly delays
- Establishes early ownership of the project by the Technical Project Planning team members
- More effectively addresses changes encountered throughout the project through continued collaboration with the Technical Project Planning team
- Provides for more comprehensive site characterization of past practices, future land uses, and exposure pathways
The Technical Project Planning team improves project efficiency and effectiveness

- The team serves as a bridge to the community
  - Typically creates community advocates
  - Establishes critical trust
  - Affects funding positively
  - Provides conduit for clear Risk Communication
  - Collects community inputs through trusted citizens and civic leaders
Project examples and lessons learned
Camp Wheeler – Macon, Georgia

- Close community relationships enabled resident acceptance of evacuation as most effective risk reduction approach and project execution
  - Frequent and regular communication of project risk for 2 years
  - Consistent and unambiguous message with program and project transparency
  - Multiple media outlets and communication methods
  - Resulted in 2 year project schedule reduction and $10M savings
Technical Project Planning: Lessons learned

- Engage the broadest representation of community cross section on the Technical Project Planning team
- Consider and respect the community demographics and special interests
  - Ethnicity, age, gender
  - Religious and community user groups
  - Schedule conflicts with major events (i.e. sporting events)
  - Economic impacts (tourism, property values)
The Community Relations plan builds on the Technical Project Planning

- Serves as a guide to the community and action plan for integrating community involvement through out the project and after completion
- Describes the relationship between the community and the project
- Plans specific community appropriate education and involvement activities
- Defines metrics for monitoring community participation and program success
A Community Relations Plan is community specific and supports project execution

- Researches and defines community demographics
- Identifies user groups
- Characterizes current and planned property use
- Defines project objectives for community involvement
- Describes the steps that will be taken to achieve the objectives typically through community involvement activities
- Identifies communication challenges, outlets, and response methods
Project-impacting community details are often unknown to project personnel and are addressed in the Community Relations Plan

- Cultural nuances
- Socio-economic factors
- Planned land usage
- Political factors
- Tourism
Critical Components of Community Involvement

- Community Interviews
- Written materials
- Media Relations
- Public meetings
Key success factors for interviews

• Identify interviewees
• Respect each interviewee’s point of view
• Address demographic influences
• Apply multiple techniques for collecting interviews
Key success factors for written materials

• Write to the audience
• Use graphics to reinforce your message
• Consider tone
• Know the purpose of the material
Key success factors for public meetings

- When you hold a meeting
- What venue you select for the meeting
- Chose effective presenters
- Watch your terminology and jargon
- Stick to a comprehensive agenda
Key success factors for media relations

- Maintain message integrity and consistency
- Build trusting relationships
- Ensure coverage of all technical elements
Lessons Learned

• Meet the community on their level and on their terms
• Treat each community member as the most important person in the world
• Check yourself at the door
• Practice best and worst cases
The Community Relations Model translates into project benefits

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefits</th>
<th>TPP and Community Relations techniques</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gaining Community Trust</td>
<td>• Broad community representation</td>
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<td>• Consistent and regular communication</td>
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<td>• Feedback and follow-up</td>
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<td>Cost reduction</td>
<td>• Align community and project objectives</td>
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<td>• Increase use and leverage of local resources</td>
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<td>Schedule acceleration</td>
<td>• Establish relationships with cooperative landowners</td>
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<td>• Identify past and future land use</td>
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<td>• Identify exposure pathways</td>
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<td>Schedule certainty</td>
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(Cont’d) The Community Relations Model translates into project benefits

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<thead>
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<tr>
<td>Project efficiency</td>
<td>• Align community and project objectives&lt;br&gt;• Identify critical opportunities, constraints, and information</td>
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<tr>
<td>Constituency support for funding and approach</td>
<td>• Align community and project objectives&lt;br&gt;• Establish relationships with cooperative landowners&lt;br&gt;• Community member project ownership</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improved characterization</td>
<td>• Identification of past and future land use&lt;br&gt;• Establish relationships with cooperative landowners</td>
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<td>Positive public perception and image</td>
<td>• Identify competing stakeholders project interests&lt;br&gt;• Identify project-impacting community details&lt;br&gt;• Maintain clear and consistent message</td>
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Questions