



# ASSE Energy Corridor Section Newsletter

May 2016

Volume 1, Number 3

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## Links:

[ASSE Energy Corridor Section](http://gulfc coast.asse.org/energy-corridor-events/)  
<http://gulfc coast.asse.org/energy-corridor-events/>

[ASSE Gulf Coast Chapter](http://gulfc coast.asse.org)  
<http://gulfc coast.asse.org>

[ASSE](http://www.asse.org)  
<http://www.asse.org>

## Get in Touch!

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## Current Events

Welcome to the May 2016 edition of the ASSE Energy Corridor Section Newsletter! We're very excited about our growing Section and the meetings, events and speakers we have coming up for you in the coming months!

Starting in 2017, we'll be moving to our new home at Spring Creek Barbeque; until December 2016, we'll continue to meet at the Wood Group-Mustang facility. We have an exciting lineup of speakers starting with next month's timely evaluation of chemical hazards.

As always, we appreciate and look forward to your feedback, input and engagement. If you have any suggestions or recommendations that you'd like to see in our newsletter or at our meetings, please feel free to let us know. Our aim is to ensure our Section is as value-added as possible to you. Please let us know your thoughts!

Additionally, we have a new opening in the Section's leadership team for our Secretary position. **Please email Tabitha if you are interested in volunteering.**

Thank you for your dedication to safety!  
*Your ASSE Energy Corridor Section Team*

## A Special Announcement!



We're proud to announce that one of our Section's pioneers and, to this day, someone greatly involved in the Section's leadership, **Rod McCain**, has been selected as the ASSE Gulf Coast Chapter's Safety Professional of the Year! This is well-deserved on Rod's part and we are very happy for him. Rod is with Wood Group-Mustang and has been instrumental not only in the safety field but in the founding and development and even hosting the location of the ASSE Energy Corridor Section meetings since its inception. Congratulations, Rod!

## Get Involved!

- Are you a speaker?
- Are you a writer?
- Have an idea for the Section?
- Have a topic you'd like to see Addressed?
- Have something to share?

## Let us know!

- Please get in touch using our contact information above to let us know your thoughts. We'd love to hear from you!

## An Opportunity!

- The Energy Corridor Section has an opening on the leadership team for our Secretary position
- If interested in pursuing this position, please feel free to get in touch with us at the contact information listed above - we'll look forward to hearing from you!

## Coming up.....

### **Energy Corridor Section Meeting**

**June 9, 2016 from 11am- 1pm**

Doug Rush, CIH, CSP, CHMM will present on the "Lessons NOT Learned: Methyl Mercaptan Release at the DuPont LaPorte, TX Plant on November 14, 2015." Mr. Rush has comprehensive experience in a multitude of businesses which include: consulting; remediation; construction; oil and gas; chemical manufacturing and refining; machining; manufacturing and assembly; hospital; government and military environments. He is also a retired Chief Master Sergeant in the U.S. Air Force.

We hope to see you at this very important presentation.



### **Gulf Coast ASSE and AIHA Joint Social Event**

**July 14, 2016 from 4:30 – 7:30**

We have been invited to participate in the upcoming social event at the Cadillac Bar in Houston (1802 Shepherd Dr, Houston, TX 77007). More info coming soon...

## Last month....

We had a great amount of members, visitors and guests in May and are looking forward to seeing everyone again in June! Please spread the word to your friends and colleagues that we'd love to see them!

### **Technical Topic: High-Reliability Safety Culture Developments – Cory Worden, M.S., CSHM, CSP, CHSP, ARM, REM, CESCO**

On May 12, 2016, the ASSE Energy Corridor Section hosted Cory Worden with the Memorial Hermann Health System. Cory discussed safety management in the healthcare setting, an industry with a higher-than-average injury rate and a plethora of hazards. With this, he discussed Memorial Hermann's journey as a high-reliability organization and the systemic and systematic approach taken to integrate safety management and culture development into each hospital and each department within the System.

Cory's slides as well as our May meeting minutes and other resources are available [here](#).

Additionally, Cory can be reached at:

Cory Worden, M.S., CSHM, CSP, CHSP, ARM, REM, CESCO  
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## Inclement Weather

With the continuing inclement weather situation in Houston and surrounding areas, the City of Houston has developed an Emergency Information Center available online.

This online resource contains important information on storm notifications, information, news and recovery information.

The City of Houston Emergency Information Center is located [here](#).

## In the News

We're sad to report that a fatality took place at the ExxonMobil facility in Beaumont, TX on Wednesday, May 11, 2016. A news report on the situation is below. As part of our continual efforts to improve safety processes and develop safety cultures, we hope that learnings can take place from unfortunate incidents as such to prevent reoccurrences. We will continue our discussions amongst our group on these topics as our Section progresses.

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BEAUMONT - The Jefferson County Sheriff's Department has released the identity of a worker killed at ExxonMobil in Beaumont on Wednesday.

OSHA is investigating the death of Miguel Barron, 37, of Brownsville after an accident at the refinery in Beaumont early Wednesday morning.

The victim was employed by Altair Strickland, an industrial engineering firm in La Porte. According to the company's website, it provides project planning and construction project manager services by industrial engineers. Altair Strickland's spokesperson handling media inquiries was not available for comment as of Wednesday evening.

Investigators tell 12News that around 12:30 a.m. Wednesday, crews were on an elevated platform, changing a heat exchanger, when a section of pipe broke off and fell on the victim. Industry experts describe an exchanger as a device similar to a radiator on your car. Pipes used on an exchanger can range from 3 to 20 feet long and can weigh from several hundred to several thousand pounds.

ExxonMobil released a statement saying:

*“ We regret that a contractor was fatally injured in an incident at a unit under maintenance at the Beaumont refinery. We have notified the appropriate authorities and are working to investigate the cause of the incident. We are greatly saddened by this and express our deepest sympathy to his family and his co-workers. ”*

Several refinery employees contacted 12News, concerned about the conditions at some area refineries. One said, "In a meeting the other day, Exxon said there is usually at least one death every turnaround." Patrick Trahan, ExxonMobil's manager of public and governmental affairs, says that is not true and that OSHA data would support his statement.

"We are determined to review this incident and find ways to prevent similar events from occurring in the future," said Trahan.

A longtime refinery employee admits the job is a dangerous one.

"We know when we sign up for the job that there's inherent risk," said an 18-year refinery worker who preferred to remain anonymous. "They have an old saying: 'Every safety rule was written in blood.' A safety rule was made because someone died from something happening."

It's worth noting that it's been just more than three years since the April 17, 2003 flash fire at the same ExxonMobil refinery killed two employees and injured two others.

## Safety Perspectives

### **The Seatbelt Scenario: The Cross-Section of Hazard Identification, Risk Assessment and Hazard Control**

**Cory Worden, M.S., CSHM, CSP, CHSP, ARM, REM, CESCO**

One of the trickiest concepts to discuss in the business world is the cross-section of hazard risk identification, risk assessment and hazard risk control (or treatment, depending on what vernacular you're using). To those viewing this through the lens of traditional risk management, there is only neutrality or a downside to any risk of any kind. There could be no loss (a good day) or a loss of some severity (a bad day). Through the lens of Enterprise Risk Management, risks could lead to no loss (an average day), a loss of some severity (a bad day), or.....here's the game changer.....an opportunity for a gain. Neither perception changes the fact that the risks will be present in frequencies defined by the task or process. Sounds like a bit like gambling, no? Guaranteed exposures but uncertain outcomes? In terms of risk management, there are decisions to be made here; options include risk acceptance, risk avoidance, risk transfer or risk control.

Without speaking in absolutes (in my experience, for what it's worth, I have yet to see an absolute of any kind while I have seen many outliers of all varieties), most agree that risk avoidance eliminates most risk and most opportunity while risk transfer mitigates risk while allowing for some opportunity. Risk acceptance is almost a pure gamble of whether the outcome will be a loss or a gain. In ethical terms, risk acceptance is thinking-person's gamble and may be professionally and socially acceptable with money. Putting down \$20 to potentially gain \$40 is an acceptance of risk that you may win \$20 or you may lose it all with your confidence in your Blackjack game being the determinant of your risk assessment. However, risk acceptance with other people's lives is not the same thing. Accepting a risk for the potential savings of money doesn't balance in the same manner when the collateral is someone's safety and well-being. The money saved on not providing proper hazard controls would not even be a talking point should someone be hurt or killed during the course of the task or process. However, this gamble does take place. It may not be ethically, professionally or socially acceptable and may only be spoken of in hushed tones in darkened corners of shady rooms, but it happens. We all know it does. Many of us have seen the worst possible outcomes of these gambles even after fighting tooth and nail to prevent them from occurring. Either way, many will claim "Safety First" and claim to support hazard control when peoples' safety and well-being are at stake. However, is hazard control *really* taking place?

When the decision is made to control a hazard, the next decision is up for consideration immediately afterwards: what hazard control is to be implemented? This is where things may get dicey. Granted, the Hierarchy of Controls is well-known. Even the most novice manager can be expected to know that elimination trumps engineering and engineering trumps administrative and PPE. Even when controls are implemented, training is needed to ensure proper use within the applicable processes. Even with training, observations and inspections are needed for oversight and validation that the controls are being utilized within the scope of work in which they're required. However, what happens when the line is blurred between hazard control and risk acceptance?

In the course of implementing hazard controls, I've heard too many managers and directors

claim effective hazard controls to be unnecessary. They'll claim 'awareness training' to be enough for safe behavior when elimination or engineering controls are possible and available. Why? They believe the more effective controls to be 'overkill.' Why? They fall back on their supposed risk assessment; they claim their risk assessment says there's no actual loss experience with the hazard being analyzed, so there's no reason to implement hazard controls, especially those that have certain costs associated with them. With this, that line between risk acceptance and hazard control has been blurred. These managers claim hazard control but deny the implementation of effective hazard controls. The acceptance of less-than-effective hazard controls when exposure frequency is certain based on the pretense that there's no actual loss experience is the same gamble as risk acceptance but masked in a thin cloak of quasi-hazard controls. It may look good on paper but it doesn't provide due diligence. Ladies and gentlemen, I present the seatbelt scenario, so pure and simple one might mistake it for proverbial common sense.

When most people (I won't speak in absolutes because there are still many who don't do this) get into their cars, they immediately put on their seatbelt. This is an effective hazard control based on the hazard of being in an automobile collision that exists with hyper-frequent exposure when driving. I haven't heard anybody ask why they have to pay for a seatbelt when buying a car because they haven't been in a collision before. Regardless of actual loss experience, the hazard control is purchased due to the certain frequency of exposure and possible severity of consequence. To say that we don't need seatbelts because we haven't been collisions before but are going to implement Defensive Driving training for 'awareness' is *not* a hazard control. It may make otherwise negligent managers feel like they've done *something* short of implementing an actual control, but we know it's not. Regardless of actual loss experience, seatbelts are worn because the possibility of a collision is ever-present (note: oversight of actual seatbelt use is a conversation on Behavior-Based Safety and leading indicators for another time while those not using seatbelts are also the subject of a risk acceptance conversation for another time). Why would lesser hazard controls despite certain exposure in the workplace be acceptable? This is only a thinly veiled version of risk acceptance. Aside from the fact that a large book-full of hazard controls are mandated by OSHA and others, the Hierarchy of Controls and associated due diligence provides a blueprint for effective hazard controls; to not follow it is neither ethically, morally, socially, professionally or even financially acceptable. Some say I'm paranoid and some say 'overkill,' but I'm willing to fight that battle forever. How else will I sleep at night?

