

Dredging Safety Group Holds Quarterly Meeting in May

BY JUDITH POWERS

The Council for Dredging and Marine Construction Safety (CDMCS) held its quarterly meeting on May 5 in Washington, D.C., with 10 representatives from member companies present.

"Our meeting went extremely well," CDMCS Co-Chair Devon Carlock told IDR. "We had in depth conversations on safety policies and best practices, and the members shared programs and training resources that have worked for them," he said.

Albert Wong, senior program manager for Construction & Operations Safety at U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Headquarters, is the other co-chair, and provides valuable insight to the group on safety issues.

"We talk frequently to discuss council issues," said Carlock, who is director of Corporate Safety for Cottrell Contracting Corp. He was elected co-chair of the group in January.

He led the meeting, beginning with a roll call and safety briefing.

Michael Gerhardt, assistant executive director of the Dredging Contractors of America (DCA), and CDMCS treasurer, updated the council on DCA safety-related items and presented a treasurer's report.

Kevin Cannon, senior director, Safety & Health Services for the Associated General Contractors (AGC), updated the group on the Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) regulatory items and upcoming OSHA meetings.

Wong presented a PowerPoint on identifying and discussing dredging mishap and accident trends through the second quarter of fiscal year 2017. Howard Cooper, safety manager for the Dutra Group, discussed drug and alcohol policies and changes that they have made to meet the new regulations on these issues.

Luis M. Bonilla, HSE dredging division manager for Weeks Marine, Inc. gave an accident trending report for the first quarter of 2017, and proposed improvements on reporting, including regional, task specific and holiday distraction tracking.

HAND SAFETY

Following a lunch break, Glenn Thomas, CDMCS Emeritus, addressed the group on hand safety, which reporting from members identified as the leading location of injuries. Council members brought in the different types of gloves they use in the field, and Thomas demonstrated each glove and reported its strengths and weaknesses. The goal is to find a universal "standard glove." Though each company has its own standard glove, injuries are still occurring, and the members agreed to invite a glove manufacturing representative to the next meeting.

Thomas also updated the council on a video presentation on hand safety that Thomas and Carlock are working with Moxie Media to produce. They have completed the script, and will do the filming at Council member companies.

The group tracks all members' incidents on a spreadsheet that contains more than 150 items,



Tyler Gray, left, and Rick Burchfield (standing) report on analytics and answer questions from the members about the revamped website. Photo by Devon Carlock

including the smallest incidents, such as stings and pinches, and body part involved. At present, most incidents are related to hands, which prompted the group to move forward with hand safety instruction.

Carlock and Wong moderated a "path forward" discussion.

"The CDMCS path forward is to continue to work in conjunction with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on safety issues; to continue the flow of information and ideas that comes from experience between industry and government. We will increase awareness of maritime construction safety and continue to add media to our new website. This will make it easier for members to access safety topics, safety posters and presentations. All members were asked to encourage other marine construction companies to join the CDMCS. We have several new ideas and goals that will be discussed and explored at our next meeting in August. There is a renewed excitement within the council, ideas and the exchange of safety information is a testament to our council members that safety has no borders, that everyone goes home safe every day," said Carlock.

Tyler Gray and Rick Burchfield of Gray Street Solutions updated the council on the CDMCS website redesign, and discussed questions from members.

Meeting attendees were officers Albert Wong, Devon Carlock and Michael Gerhardt. Members present were Carol Shobrook, president, sales and marketing of JT Cleary; Greg Ford, safety manager, Inland Dredging; Alan K. Slifer, safety & personnel director, Norfolk Dredging Company; Luis Bonilla, HSE, Weeks Marine; Tim Weckwerth, vice president of Safety for Weeks Marine; Kevin Cannon, AGC; and Nazia Shah, AGC.

The proposed date for the next meeting is August 9.

FOUNDED IN 2008

The council was founded in April 2008 to establish a joint effort between industry and government to create a 100 percent injury-free workplace for the dredging and marine construction industries. Representatives from the Corps of Engineers, DCA and AGC signed the original charter.

When Carlock was elected in January, his goals were to revamp the group's website and logo, and to make the members section "members only."

"We put a lot of effort into the Toolbox items, and you get that for your membership," he said.

In addition, members have access to other members and government representatives at the meetings, to discuss specific safety problems and questions. In the lessons-learned forums, companies share their best safety practices with companies that might not have the same expertise, without regard to questions of competition, Carlock said.

If a company is having a problem with a safety issue at any time, Carlock said, he can put them in contact with safety personnel from another company, who will usually make it priority to help with advice, he said.

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There are now more than 52 industry-specific Toolbox talks available to members on the site, as well as tips on training, posters, and PowerPoints, said Carlock.

The meetings also give the government – OSHA and Corps safety officers – a forum with industry to provide feedback on regulations and the effectiveness of their manuals, including the Corps Safety and Health Requirements Manual – EM 385-1-1, last updated in 2014.

The dredging industry is focused on EM 385-1-1, and is not as familiar with OSHA regulations. To understand OSHA regulations, which deal mostly with land-based activities, the group relies heavily on its AGC members, who deal with it every day, Carlock said.

All the large dredging contractors in the U.S. are members, along with many medium and small companies, some of whom are not affiliated with other dredging organizations. The group is independent and open to all dredging and marine construction companies. ✦