

CBUD Wastewater Treatment Plant Labor-Management Committee (LMC) Annual Report to the Utilities Service Board

The LMC last reported to the Utilities Service Board on April 27, 2009. This report highlights important LMC activities and accomplishments from May 2009 through October 2010. Since April 2009, the LMC has met regularly, once each month.

LMC-Sponsored Safety / Training Events

Since April 2009, the LMC has sponsored twelve safety/training sessions. In May '09, Jean Joque presented a session entitled "Dealing with Difficult People." The next month, the LMC sponsored two sessions: confined space training with Brian Wilson, and welding safety with Cronotron. In July, Brian Wilson returned to lead a session on chlorine operations. The LMC finished the 2009 sessions with electric motor safety presented by Bearing Headquarters in August, product safety with HP Products in September, and two sessions of plant chemistry training with Barb Smith in October. Smith's sessions were approved by IDEM as wastewater operator continuing education courses. Employees from the two wastewater plants, the Monroe plant, and several from T&D attended the sessions.

The LMC began safety/training sessions again in February 2010, starting with Lee Balliet's session on working with developmentally disabled persons. The next month, Bobby Johnson, Jr. provided SCBA (self-contained breathing apparatus) training, and in April, Jones Chemical led chlorine and sodium hypochlorite training. Over the following months, two Blucher-Poole employees led a session on sampling adjustments from shift-to-shift, Brian Wilson returned in June to provide training on electrical safety, Barb Smith conducted a two-hour program covering bulking/foaming applications for operators and maintenance employees in August, and in September, Dave Metzger led a session on electrical arc shock safety.

The LMC will finish out the 2010 training session in October. Rita Heckard from HP products will present on "green products."

Annual Retreats

The LMC held its annual retreats on June 19, 2009, and June 24, 2010 at Twin Lakes Lodge.

In 2009, CBUD Director Patrick Murphy opened the meeting thanking the LMC for its dedication and work over the previous year, citing the way the LMC has improved communication between and among plant employees and administrators. Following Murphy's remarks, the Director engaged in a short discussion with the LMC on plant equipment needs and possible capital improvements.

The LMC's agenda for the retreat included discussion of the recent employee training and plant supervisor surveys (discussed below). These surveys helped the LMC identify, investigate, and resolve ongoing problems and issues within the WWTPs, and further, gave the LMC suggestions for future safety/training sessions. The LMC also discussed its plans and priorities for the coming year, and mid-way through the day, Jean Joque provided them with a brief training session about working with disabled persons.

In 2010, Director Murphy again opened the meeting, and echoed his remarks from the previous year. Murphy also took time to explain the process of applying for and obtaining rate increases for water and wastewater customers. Ensuing LMC discussion with the Director was largely about needed capital improvements at the plants.

The committee spent most of the retreat, following their regular monthly meeting, discussing a range of past improvements and continuing needs. Some of these include:

- Improvements: *Overall plant communication, increasing levels of trust, safety training and practices, technical training opportunities, relations with the USB, development of plant operations policies, communications with Engineering.*
- Continuing needs: *Involving employees in plant upgrade projects, communication with AFSCME local leadership, overall employee participation in the committee process.*

The discussion of improvement and setbacks allowed the LMC to pinpoint areas needing attention and focus over the coming year.

The LMC also took time to identify priorities for 2010-2011. Some priorities include: *Scheduling LMC safety/training events to encourage greater participation, finding ways to engage employees in the LMC process, ensure a transparent LMC budget.*

IWEA Conference

In fall 2009, the LMC sent several plant operators to the Indiana Water Environment Association (IWEA) annual conference in Indianapolis. Pending administrative approval, operators will also attend this year's conference.

Employee Survey

In mid-2009, the LMC distributed a survey to plant employees. The survey was split in two parts: the first dealt with communications and management practices at the plant level. John Langley, on behalf of the CBUD Administration, agreed to work with the LMC to investigate the issues raised and take corrective action.

The second part of the survey gave employees the opportunity to suggest topics for future safety/training events. Since the survey, many of the topics the employees suggested have become successful training sessions.

Plant Supervisors' Survey

At the same time the LMC distributed the Employee Survey, another survey was given to plant supervisors. Some of the concerns and issues arising from these surveys were addressed through training sessions suggested in the Employee Survey.

Night/Swing Shift Survey

Following the July 2010 meeting, the LMC distributed a survey to night and swing shift employees. The response was largely positive, as employees reported that the LMC was adequately meeting their needs and interests. The LMC quickly addressed respondents' concerns in their monthly meetings immediately following the survey.

Dillman Road SOPs

Through late-2009 and early-2010, the LMC operations committee worked to update the Standard Operating Procedures at Dillman Road to reflect changes made with the plant's pump stations.

New Policy Statement on Education and Training Opportunity

In mid-Summer 2010, the LMC discussed and approved a new Operations Policy Statement on Education and Training Opportunities, which stated the LMC's intent to make work-related education and training available to all eligible employees, assist those in need of continuing education to maintain certification, and provide departmental funds to pay for employee education and training on a fair and equal basis for all.

Quarterly Meetings with Engineering

The LMC has continued to engage in quarterly meetings with Mike Hicks and Mike Bengtson from Engineering. Discussion between the LMC and Engineers has focused on resolving issues with plant operation and monitoring. Most recently, Hicks and Bengtson attended the September LMC meeting, where progress was made in resolving Blucher-Poole SCADA reporting issues, and improving overall communication between the plants and Engineering.

Consultant's Contract Renewed

In August 2009, the LMC recommended that Lee Balliet's contract be renewed. In February 2010, the USB renewed Balliet's contract through early 2011.

Interns

Three SPEA interns have worked with the LMC since the last report. The newest intern, Chuck Mason, is originally from Northern Michigan, and completed his undergraduate work at Kalamazoo College. Beginning his first-year as a graduate student at SPEA, Chuck will be with CBUD through mid-2012.

Steve Drake,
LMC Executive Council

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