

KARNETTE TOWN HALL MEETING ON PORT SECURITY
August 25, 2005 at Peck Park, San Pedro, CA

The Committee on Port Security & Safety attended this meeting in lieu of their regular monthly meeting, and these are the minutes of the meeting.

PANEL PRESENTATION

Captain Peter Neffenger, U. S. Coast Guard, helps implement the Maritime Transportation Security Act which passed two years ago, and helps guide the Area Maritime Security Committee which is represented by many local safety and security agencies. The Committee will be working more actively on evacuation and emergency preparation procedures for the Community.

George Cummings, Homeland Security Director, Port of LA, works on getting the funds to provide the port security. He applies for federal grants and other funds to advance security by hiring more police, posted cameras, container detectors, and the latest communications equipment. He also assists in coordinating local security agencies. He is now working closely with key people in Washington D C to get recurring funds rather than rely on one-time federal grants.

Stephen Sellers, Southern Regional Administrator for the California Office of Emergency Services, said "all individuals need to be responsible and look for risks at home and in the community." He works with all jurisdictions to assure that there are available resources to share between communities in an emergency. He also works closely with the Federal agencies responsible for various emergency situations.

Lt. Michael Graychik, Lt., Los Angeles Port Police, also assisted in federal grant writing and helps manage the three K-9 units which are used primarily for the cruise ships and the Catalina boats. He is involved with the new Decontamination Trailer, hazard materials unit, sea marshal program, security for the passenger ships, dive teams, and the Area Maritime Security Committee.

Sergeant Rosa Reynoso, Lt., Los Angeles Port Police, works on investigations on all port issues which are or may be of a criminal nature. She works with the LAPD on intelligence information.

Chief Darren Palacios, Los Angeles Fire Department, Battalion 6, staff spoke on the comprehensive training that firemen have on emergency situations including hazardous materials (special unit at Grand & Adams), an urban search & rescue unit which serves the Harbor, and the new powerful water fire boat. The current Fire Department response time averages 6 minutes, and the goal is to reduce this to 5 minutes. Two weeks ago there was a fire in one of the containers on a 400-ft ship, and the response time by the Fire Department was swift. There are generally 1,000 firemen on duty at any point in time in the City of Los Angeles. The Fire Department has a Homeland Security unit and works very closely with other similar units in the City.

Sergent Robert Teramura, Los Angeles Police Dept, Harbor Division, plays a lead role in working on Port security issues as a representative of the Los Angeles Police Department. He feels the Area Maritime Security Committee is perhaps the best functioning proactive multi-agency security group in the country. He discussed the possibility of a close working relationship with C.O.P.S.S - a community security committee of neighborhood council representatives and interested community reps.

Peter Peyton, International Longshoremen's Warehouse Union Local 63, spoke passionately about the failure of the administration in Washington DC to prioritize and secure sound funding for prevention and early detection of potential terror activities. He also was very critical of national-

level leadership for failing to adequately implement the current regulations for improving security. He estimated that perhaps only 20% of the original regulations were being truly implemented. He said there was way too much spin and no real enforcement of most of the regulations.

Betty Karnette, California Assembly Representative, questioned the Panel on the source of dollars for Port Security. Some felt fees could be increased, customs revenue could be redirected to Port security, and more grants could be sought. **Betty K** asked, "What are the most important unmet needs?" The Panel replied: "more posted cameras, fiber optics communication systems, increased screening of cargo containers and the setting up of an area on Terminal Island to inspect questionable containers." Threat-based funding clearly needs to be increased. Peter Neffenger said the U.S. Government has distributed \$550,000,000 for security and another \$150,000,000 is in the pipeline. There is also a need to revisit the movement of high-risk chemical tanks to Pier 400.

Audience Questions:

Is there an Evacuation Plan?

Peter N.: There are lots of evacuation plans, perhaps keyed to certain departments such as the Fire and Police Departments, but there is a need to tie all the plans together in preparation for a broader emergency. The Area Maritime Security Committee will focus on this as one of the priorities beginning in October, with a goal to complete the plan for testing in the spring. The next meeting of the full committee is on November 9th. It is hoped that the plan will include an automatic telephone calling system to all potential impacted houses in the area. Currently 911 calls made on cell phones go to the California Highway Patrol; however, this too may change to assure more efficient and speedy contacts with emergency agencies. If there is an emergency, the media will be contacted for immediate program intervention with information about the emergency and appropriate actions required of the community. This information will also be available via the radio weather alert station.

When will a container inspection program be implemented?

There is a major emphasis now in the 'sending ports' around the world to assure that the cargos being shipped are not problematic. There are 12 million cargo containers coming into the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach each year, so human inspection of all cargo containers is not reasonable, cost-wise. Los Angeles Police have 17 agents in 17 Ports checking cargo. Radiation portals are being installed in various locations including the Port of Los Angeles. The current percent of inspections is higher than we are aware of, and perhaps for security reasons the actual percentage was not given. The Ports of LA and Long Beach together handle 43% of cargo coming into the US. The audience was invited to participate in the November 9th meeting of the Area Maritime Security Committee.

Special Note: Joe Gatlin and Dan Pasley got up and spoke on behalf of COPSS. Also, Robert Teramura asked representatives from COPSS to raise their hands. There were at least 6 COPSS committee members present.

Respectfully submitted by Tom Villiger, COPSS Committee Member