

## **Local Transportation Institutional Project\***

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The Local Transportation Institutional Project promotes institutional interaction on matters related to the transportation of hazardous (primarily radioactive) materials. Coordinated through a cooperative agreement between the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and the Urban Energy & Transportation Corp. (UETC), the heart of the project is the Local Government Network comprising officials from jurisdictions along transportation corridors linking DOE sites.

UETC began developing the Local Government Network through regional workshops with local and DOE officials. As the Network grew, UETC decided to publish a quarterly newsletter and later to hold national conferences every other year to maintain contact with former workshop participants. In the past year, UETC has expanded its network of local officials by adding local emergency planning committee chairmen and members of State municipal leagues to the newsletter mailing list. UETC also reaches more people by making information available via an electronic bulletin board and on the Internet. By expanding the Local Government Network, UETC has created an extensive data base of local officials interested and involved in hazardous materials transportation safety and incident response.

UETC's regional workshops are held in areas along DOE's transportation corridors to acquaint local government officials with DOE transportation programs. They also provide local officials an opportunity to share their concerns about radioactive materials being transported through their jurisdictions with managers in DOE's transportation and emergency management programs. UETC invites a mix of elected officials, emergency responders, emergency response planners, and others in local government listed in the data base. Typically, workshops are limited to 25 participants from local government. About 100 local officials who have attended previous workshops participate in the

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\* This work, performed by the Urban Energy & Transportation Corporation, is supported by the U.S. Department of Energy under Cooperative Agreement No. DE-SC01-94EW54065.

national conferences. Workshops and conferences usually run 2 or 3 days and include presentations by DOE managers, representatives from other Federal agencies, local and State officials, and transportation industry representatives. Often, participants tour a DOE facility during the workshop to reduce their apprehension and increase their understanding of DOE programs. Past tours include the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant in New Mexico, Fernald in Ohio, and the DOE Emergency Operations Center in Washington, D.C. Workshops and conferences conclude with interactive sessions so participants can share their reactions to and concerns about what they have learned. Their ideas are summarized in the *Local Government Perspectives* series of papers.

*Energy & Transportation Network News*, UETC's quarterly newsletter, is sent to more than 6,000 readers in the Local Government Network database. The newsletter contains articles about the DOE transportation program and specific shipping campaigns, relevant legislation, and resources available to local officials from industry and other Federal agencies. The local perspective is included in articles about and by local officials, making the newsletter a true information exchange tool. UETC uploads the newsletter and *Local Government Perspectives* papers onto the Hazardous Materials Information Exchange bulletin board sponsored by the U.S. Department of Transportation and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Individually, UETC's workshops, papers, newsletter, and electronic bulletin board topic have been successful tools for institutional involvement. They also have worked well together to establish a network of local government contacts along transportation corridors between DOE sites. The data base has proven its value and will continue to be a useful resource to DOE as it involves local governments in its transportation and emergency response decision-making processes.