



# DIRECTOR'S CORNER



I have so much to report to you, I really do not know where to start. The year 2006 saw a lot of growth and good things for the Center but we also had our share of tragedy. The 2006 Annual Symposium of the Mary Kay O'Connor Process Safety Center superceded all previous attendance records. This year's Symposium was the 9<sup>th</sup> in the series, an important annual event that focuses on research, education, training, and service issues that impact safety.

During 2005-2006, the Center developed outreach programs with various national and international organizations. The Center is also maintaining an active involvement with the Reactive Chemical Alliance and Reactivity Management Roundtable. On the international front, the Center is continuing its collaborative partnerships with Korea Gas Safety Corporation and Seoul National University, both from South Korea. Dr. Adam Markowski from the University of Lodz in Poland finished a six-month stay at the Center. The Center has also established agreements for long-term research collaboration with the University of Lodz. The Center has also developed exchange programs with Universidad del Santander in Bucarmanga, Colombia and Las Universidad del Zulia in Maracaibo, Venezuela.

The Center continues to provide cost-effective short courses at various Houston locations as well as tailored courses at various plant sites throughout the United States. Recent events in industry have brought additional focus on specific areas of process safety and plant operations that need renewed and focused attention. These areas include facility siting, atmospheric venting and process upset management. To address this need, the Center organized 1-day workshops on each one of these topics. The objective was to provide an open forum for discussion of the issues, gaps in technology, and path forward.

## 1-Day Workshops

February 1, 2006 -

### **Atmospheric Relief Workshop**

Featuring speakers from the Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board (CSB), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), major operating companies, and the Mary Kay O'Connor Process Safety Center (MKOPSC).  
Location: Marriott Hotel, George Bush Intercontinental, Houston

July 13, 2006 -

### **Process Upset Management Workshop**

Featuring speakers from government, major operating companies, and leading technology firms.  
Location: HESS Club, 5430 Westheimer Road, Houston

September 29, 2006 -

### **Facility Siting Workshop**

Featuring speakers from the Environmental Protection Agency), Occupational Safety and Health Administration, major operating companies, and the Mary Kay O'Connor Process Safety Center  
Location: Marriott Hotel, George Bush Intercontinental, Houston

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Some of the other outreach and service activities accomplished during 2005-2006 include the following:

- ◆ Development of research collaboration with Dr. Maria Papadaki of Leeds University, United Kingdom
- ◆ Review and input to the Government Accountability Office report on Chemical Infrastructure Protection
- ◆ Review of the National Academy report on, "Terrorism and Chemical Infrastructure – Protecting People and Reducing Vulnerabilities.
- ◆ Provide input to curriculum and program development at the Pennsylvania State University.
- ◆ Development and implementation of Ethics training course as required by Texas Administrative Code
- ◆ Coordination of research and other activities with CCPS
- ◆ Continuing collaboration and exchange programs with organizations in Canada, Columbia, India, Indonesia, Japan, Mexico, Poland, Qatar, South Korea, United Kingdom, and Venezuela.

The Center also maintains close relationship and participates in the activities of many professional organizations as well as government agencies. These include:

- ⇒ **the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry,**
- ⇒ **the American Institute of Chemical Engineers,**
- ⇒ **the American Society of Safety Engineers,**
- ⇒ **the International Institute of Ammonia Refrigeration,**
- ⇒ **the National Fire Protection Association,**
- ⇒ **the Occupational Safety and Health Administration,**
- ⇒ **the UK Health and Safety Executive,**
- ⇒ **the UK Institute of Chemical Engineers,**
- ⇒ **the US Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board,**
- ⇒ **and US Environmental Protection Agency.**

During 2005-2006, the Center also continued to work on significant research projects in the following areas:

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| ▪ Practical Risk Reduction  | ▪ Small Business Process Safety Programs                        |
| ▪ LNG Vapor Cloud Control and Mitigation Research                   | ▪ Engineering for Sustainable Development                       |
| ▪ Fault Diagnosis for Plant Operations and HAZOP Design/Improvement | ▪ Propane Incident Data Collection Project                      |
| ▪ Quantitative Risk Analysis on Hydrolysate Post-Treatment Process  | ▪ Chemical Stability and Reactivity Analysis for Storage of HAN |
|   | ▪ Safety Climate, Attitudes, and Decision Making                |

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The year 2006 also brought tragedy and a major loss for the Center. As you know, on October 4, 2006 we lost Dr. Harry H. West, a prolific supporter of the Center and its research, and a mentor for students in the Chemical Engineering Department and world-wide. Harry's endless desire to push, to pull, and encourage everyone to make the best of themselves and their gifts, will be missed every bit as much as his stories for every occasion.

One of Harry's leading contributions to process safety and the Center was his dedication to the students and their research. He believed that laying the groundwork for making safety second nature rested with the "kids", in what they learned during their college years and their time at the Center. Through this new generation of engineers, Harry's dedication to teaching process safety, especially in the fields of LNG, risk assessment, and abnormal situation management has given industry a head start in the integration of safety practices and awareness.

**The Harry H. West Memorial Endowment for Process Safety has been established to provide endowed student fellowships and scholarships to undergraduate and graduate students pursuing academic and research programs in process safety.**

In memory of Harry and his life's work, Mike O'Connor, in his unwavering, giving manner, has issued a challenge grant, that for every dollar contributed to the Harry H. West Memorial Endowment for Process Safety, he will match the contribution, up to \$500,000. To give to this endowment, please send your checks made out to the Mary Kay O'Connor Process Safety Center with a cover letter directing that the funds are meant for the Harry West Memorial Endowment for Process Safety. Or, you may contact Ms. Sara Lillehaugen at the Texas A&M Foundation Engineering Development Office at phone (979) 845-5113 or email saral@tamu.edu for more information.

**Finally, I would like to report to you about the \$12.5 million gift to the Mary Kay O'Connor Process Safety Center as part of the settlement of the Rowe lawsuit arising out of the explosion at BP's Texas City refinery.**

The primary use of these funds by the Center will be to provide financial support for the students studying in the center. These young people are the ones who are preparing to enter the work force with a sound grounding in process safety, and they can make a difference in the future of workplace safety. We believe that this gift will help transform a tragedy into a positive legacy, help educate a new generation of engineers, and help improve safety performance in the industry. The Texas A&M Foundation will manage the gift to ensure that the funds will support objectives of the settlement agreement. The Foundation manages investments in academic excellence to enhance Texas A&M University's capability to be among the best universities.

*M. Sam Mannan*

Fall 2006