



West Virginia State Journal reporter Sam Vargo joined other news media to cover the forum.



Activist Dr. Paul Nuchims asked about chemicals' effect on public health.



Rick Hodge, chairman of the West Virginia Chemical Alliance Zone, said his group wants to bring in new chemical firms that do little environmental harm.

# Forum examines sustainable future

## nicsnews

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### Action plan will seek ways to improve protective actions

Building on momentum sparked at its national conference last fall, NICS has announced an action plan to help public safety officials improve ways to protect the public during chemical emergencies.

The plan is to be a cooperative effort between NICS and groups concerned with public safety, said Mark Scott, president and CEO.

The plan is based on suggestions by public safety, government and other officials who attended *Protecting the Public '99*, a national conference NICS sponsored in Concord, CA, last October.

"We held the conference to exchange ideas and suggestions for

*See Action Plan, p.3*

### NICS analyzes TRI data for Pennsylvania agency

The National Institute for Chemical Studies has completed an analysis of Toxic Release Inventory data filed with the US EPA by companies in Pennsylvania.

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection requested the study. The data are for releases from 1987 through 1998.

The EPA's TRI program requires companies that use certain amounts of listed chemicals to file reports on releases.

The analysis shows the extent of releases into the air, water and land.

The report is similar to one NICS publishes about toxic chemical releases in West Virginia. **nics**

### Speakers suggest ways to live today that preserve environment for tomorrow

A new, environment-friendly building in Pennsylvania will get its power from roof top solar panels and a ground heat source. Excess electricity those sources generate will be sold to an outside utility.

Robert J. Barkanic, deputy secretary in the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, described the state-owned "green" building. He said it shows how government can be a leader in protecting the environment for future generations while meeting today's business needs.

Barkanic was among the speakers at a NICS forum May 18 on "Creating a Sustainable Community: The Chemical Industry and the Community."

The forum helped mark the 15th anniversary of NICS' founding.

Some 60 people attended the 2½



Barkanic

*See Forum, p. 3*

# NICS marks 15 years of service

NICS is marking its 15th birthday this year with an eye on its successes and sights on the future.

"We think NICS has helped make the Kanawha Valley a better place to live," said NICS President and CEO Mark Scott.

"It's better because today the chemical industry and its neighbors talk to each other about how to live together in the same area. Back in 1985 and earlier, dialogue wasn't a tool for resolving problems."

NICS was born just months after a December 1984 chemical leak in Bhopal, India, killed or injured thousands of people. Union Carbide made the same chemical, methyl isocyanate, at Institute, WV.

Area residents wanted to know if the same thing could happen here that happened at Bhopal. Union Carbide and others in the industry were not used to telling neighbors about their operations. Both sides dug in their heels.

To help bring the industry and public together, area business and civic leaders, led by Russell H. Wehrle, founded NICS. NICS would provide scientific, unbiased data about chemical risks to both groups and be a neutral party to facilitate dialogue.

Public groups kept pressing the companies for more information about their operations. The companies feared release of the information would cause a panic and keep new business out of the area.

Nonetheless, they took a gamble in 1994. They volunteered to make public their worst-case chemical accident scenarios at a communitywide event called *Safety Street*. NICS was a leader in the effort.

The disclosures did not cause a panic, as some had feared. To the

contrary, the companies learned they could be more open with the public. With NICS' help, industry-public groups started meeting to exchange information.

In the years following, NICS helped nurture the relationship by providing information about chemical risks in the community, helping industry and public groups communicate and helping emergency planners and responders improve through training and counseling.

NICS has also trained and counseled groups around the nation, as the founders envisioned. For example,



*Instructor Bill Reilly works in the EPA's Chemical Emergency Preparedness and Prevention Office.*

NICS sponsored a national conference last fall in California on protecting the public during chemical emergencies.

NICS continues to look ahead. The main questions directors must answer are: how can NICS better accomplish its mission in today's environment, and what other communities in the nation would profit by NICS' experience in the Kanawha Valley?

NICS will certainly be a different organization 15 years from now, but will likely still be helping groups talk to each other. **nics**



*Dao Nguyen works for Michelin North America in Greenville, South Carolina.*

## FORM R workshop attracts diverse audience

People who have to report toxic chemical releases for their companies got some tips from an EPA insider on how to fill out the form.

Form R was the subject of a NICS-sponsored workshop in Charleston, WV in April. It drew environmental engineers, managers and others who report toxic chemical releases for coal, chemical and other

companies. Participants came from several states in the East and Southeast.

Data from the forms are used to help track toxic chemical releases into the environment.

EPA official Bill Reilly conducted the workshop. He detailed Form R requirements and filing procedures for the 25 participants. **nics**

## Proceedings available from national conference on protective actions

Proceedings from the *Protecting the Public '99* national conference NICS sponsored last year are now available for \$25.

The conference focused on public protective action decision-making during chemical emergencies.

The proceedings include summaries of talks by 16 speakers who participated in four panels:

- How effective are protective actions?
- How can we make the best protective action choices?
- How can communication with the public be improved? and

- What roles should stakeholders play in managing risk?

The proceedings also include complete transcriptions of talks by:

- Dennis Mileti, Ph.D., director of the Natural Hazards Research and Applications Center at the University of Colorado, and
- William Walker, M.D., director of Contra Costa (CA) Health Services.

Also included is a post-conference assessment by Dave Palmer, president and owner of Emergency Response Planning & Management. **nics**

### Forum, cont. from p.1

hour event at the University of Charleston. They were from industry, government and citizen groups.

Other speakers were:

- Maggie Moore, a working board member with the Institute for Sustainable Ethics and Economics at Eugene, Ore., and
- Rick Hodge, chairman of West Virginia's newly-formed Chemical Alliance Zone (CAZ).

Moore said manufacturers can learn from the environment. "In biological systems, there is no waste," she said. "Every system output is either returned harmlessly to the ecosystem as a nutrient or it becomes input for another process." Following that example, she said



Moore

most German companies are required to dispose of their products that are no longer useful. "Manufacturers are motivated to design cars and computers for re-manufacture, turning waste back into value," Moore said. She said other countries should consider similar policies.



Hodge

Hodge said the CAZ wants to retain and expand existing chemical plants and attract new chemical-related businesses to the area.

At the same time, the goal is for new facilities to make a smaller environmental footprint, he said.

There are about 10,000 fewer jobs in the Kanawha Valley chemical industry than 10 years ago, Hodge said. Another half of the work force is expected to change in the next seven years.

### Action Plan, cont. from p.1

improving public protective actions," Scott said. "The action plan is the way we're going to follow through on what we heard."

The action plan calls for three broad initiatives:

- Develop and distribute guidance about planning for and using protective actions;
- Conduct additional research into technical and sociological aspects of protective actions, and
- Seek cooperation from other institutions and organizations to improve the protective action process.

NICS will ask the emergency planning and response community to identify projects that will add to knowledge in each of those areas, Scott said. "That feedback will tell us stakeholders' priorities and help us initiate projects to address them."

One topic many people are interested in is shelter-in-place, he stated. NICS is now working on a project, under a US EPA cooperative agreement, to identify cases where shelter-in-place has been used in chemical emergencies and how effective it has been.

There is also interest in holding another national conference to share information and explore new ideas. "We will hold another conference, but the location and date have yet to be decided," Scott said. **nics**

Hodge said the downsizing has resulted in considerable unused capacity.

He said the region faces challenges related to construction costs, regulatory issues, legal matters and bad publicity in attracting new investment.

NICS plans to share the forum proceedings with community leaders. **nics**

## LEPC offers shelter-in-place program for office workers

The Kanawha Putnam Emergency Planning Committee is asking Kanawha Valley firms to adopt a shelter-in-place plan to protect employees in office buildings in case of daytime chemical emergencies.

“Many people in the Valley know how to shelter-in-place at home because of publicity over the years,” said John Thomas, KPEPC chairman. “Protecting people in office buildings is a different situation, and we want to help businesses prepare for it.”

The KPEPC offers training to employees who will be responsible for shelter-in-place programs where they work. The two-hour training includes a model shelter-in-place plan

businesses can tailor to their own needs.

KPEPC members conduct the training at a firm’s offices. The National Institute for Chemical Studies helped create the model plan and training program.

The KPEPC will contact about 130 firms initially to offer the training. Those that start a program and conduct a drill will receive a certificate from the KPEPC.

For more information about the shelter-in-place program for businesses, call KPEPC administrator J. R. Bias at (304) 744-1838.

More information about the KPEPC is available on its Web site at [kpepc.org](http://kpepc.org).

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