# A Community Relations Model

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Sea dumped Conference

# Overview

- Development of the Community Relations Model
    - History of Community Relations
    - Definition of success
    - Positive and negative project impacts
- Presentation of the Model
    - Six principles of Community Relations
    - Key Tools
    - Lessons Learned
    - Success factors
    - Summary of tools and benefits

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# The first approach to Community Relations was based on the EPA model

- Data heavy
- No system/ vehicle for soliciting and collecting public inputs
- Reactive community involvement

it's all about me.
deal with it.

# The model progressed...

- Still data heavy
- Solicited community inputs but we didn't integrate them into project decision making
- One model for all communities
- Involvement post field work



I know how you feel.
I just don't care.
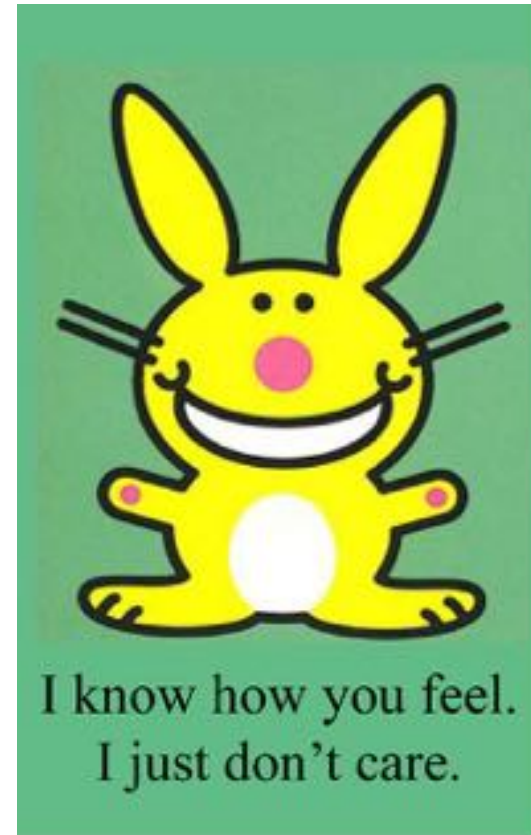
# Today's Community Relations Model

- Dynamic information exchange
- Community-sensitive activities and communication
- Active and responsive listening
- Communities stakeholders are integrated into each aspect of the project

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This presentation will describe the Community Relations Model that is being applied in U.S. with success

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Reduced Risks

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Reduced Risks

+ Community Buy-in

# The Community Relations Model success can be seen through benefits to the community and governing agency

Clear Benefits to the Community

- Reduced risk
- Clean environment
- Protection of property values
- Confidence in government and project
- Some agenda items met

Clear Benefits to the governing agency

- Reduced project costs
- Shortened schedules with improved certainty
- Positive public and community image
- Rapid and full receipt of Right of Entry

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# Effective community involvement reduces cost and schedule for Site Remediation

- ## Positive Impacts
  - Full characterize of the site
  - Alignment of community and project objectives
  - Provides ideas and resources for improving project cost and schedule performance
  - Builds constituency supportive of project funding and agency commitments
  - Positive project image multiplies community support

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# (Cont'd) Effective community involvement reduces cost and schedule for Site Remediation

- ## Negative Impacts
  - Slow down or stop project execution
  - Uncooperative landowners, civic leaders, and business owners increase project costs
  - Combative legal filings
  - Lack of constituency support reduces project priority and funding
  - Failure to identify critical past and future land use and contamination activities
  - Uninformed community results in potential for safety and contamination exposures
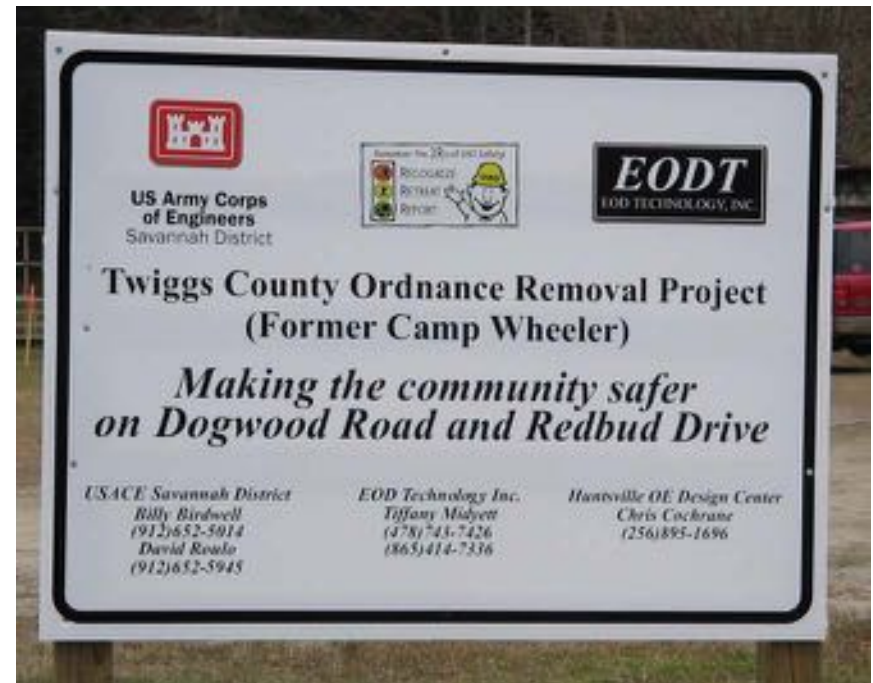
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# Community Relations Model

# Six Principles of Successful Community Relations

1.) Establish and commit to a project message(s)

– Example:

*The number one goal of this project is to reduce the risk of munitions exposure to community members and site users in a timely manner within the budget we have available.*



**Value:** Ensures clarity within the community

# Six Principles of Successful Community Relations

## 2.) Speak with one voice

– Every team member echoes the same message, policies, and approach.

– All written materials reflect the same information and vernacular.

**Value:** *Continuity within the community*

# Six Principles of Successful Community Relations

3.) Have a dedicated Community Relations point of contact

- – Serves as liaison between technical experts and the community

- – Should be an individual with which the community can identify

**Value:** Establishes trust-based relationship

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# Six Principles of Successful Community Relations

4.) Apply the Risk Communication Model

- Understand your audience
  - Identify potential issues
  - Identify potential agendas
- Listen twice as much as you speak
- Avoid jargon and streamline technical data
- Show empathy
- Maintain continuity of team points of contact

**Value:** Responds to the Human Psychology of Risk

# Six Principles of Successful Community Relations

## 5.) Provide multiple and regular communication methods



- You should cater to the audience not assume how they receive information.

- Saturate them with information that is tailored to them.

**Value:** People respond best with they are well informed

# Six Principles of Successful Community Relations

## 6.) Have an exit strategy

– Projects will have an impact on the community.  Have an exit strategy for completion of the project and a contingency strategy should funding be withdrawn.

**Value:** They will remember best what you do last

# The Community Relations Model has two key tools: Technical Project Planning Process and Community Relations Plan

- These tools are the primary components of community involvement and are field-proven
  - The early involvement identifies critical opportunities, constraints, and information
  - More productive (stakeholder ownership of project objectives and dynamic participation)

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# The Technical Project Planning Process effectively identifies and incorporates stakeholders and regulators in project planning

- Identifies all stakeholders that have an interest and/or influence over a project

- Identifies competing or conflicting stakeholder project interests

- Improves alignment of project and community objectives

- Determines minimum data quality objectives for meeting community priorities

- Establishes an agreed upon site close-out goals based on future land uses

# Technical Project Planning Process is successful when key stakeholders and regulators are effectively engaged in advance of project start-up

- Proactively identifies and addresses potential conflicts to avoid costly delays

- Establishes early ownership of the project by the Technical Project Planning team members

- More effectively addresses changes encountered through out the project through continued collaboration with the Technical Project Planning team

- Provides for more comprehensive site characterization of past practices, future land uses, and exposure pathways

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# The Technical Project Planning team improves project efficiency and effectiveness

- The team serves as a bridge to the community
  - Typically creates community advocates
  - Establishes critical trust
  - Affects funding positively
  - Provides conduit for clear Risk Communication
  - Collects community inputs through trusted citizens and civic leaders

# Project examples and lessons learned
# Camp Wheeler – Macon, Georgia

- Close community relationships enabled resident acceptance of evacuation as most effective risk reduction approach and project execution

  - Frequent and regular communication of project risk for 2 years

  - Consistent and unambiguous message with program and project transparency

  - Multiple media outlets and communication methods

  - Resulted in 2 year project schedule reduction and $10M savings



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# Technical Project Planning: Lessons learned

- Engage the broadest representation of community cross section on the Technical Project Planning team
- Consider and respect the community demographics and special interests
  - Ethnicity, age, gender
  - Religious and community user groups
  - Schedule conflicts with major events (i.e. sporting events)
  - Economic impacts (tourism, property values)

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# The Community Relations plan builds on the Technical Project Planning

- Serves as a guide to the community and action plan for integrating community involvement through out the project and after completion

- Describes the relationship between the community and the project

- Plans specific community appropriate education and involvement activities

- Defines metrics for monitoring community participation and program success

# A Community Relations Plan is community specific and supports project execution

- Researches and defines community demographics
- Identifies user groups
- Characterizes current and planned property use
- Defines project objectives for community involvement
- Describes the steps that will be taken to achieve the objectives typically through community involvement activities
- Identifies communication challenges, outlets, and response methods

# Project-impacting community details are often unknown to project personnel and are addressed in the Community Relations Plan

- Cultural nuances
- Socio-economic factors
- Planned land usage
- Political factors
- Tourism

# Critical Components of Community Involvement

- Community Interviews
- Written materials
- Media Relations
- Public meetings

# Key success factors for interviews

- Identify interviewees

- Respect each interviewee's point of view

- Address demographic influences

- Apply multiple techniques for collecting interviews

# Key success factors for written materials

- Write to the audience
- Use graphics to reinforce your message
- Consider tone
- Know the purpose of the material



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# Key success factors for public meetings

- When you hold a meeting
- What venue you select for the meeting
- Chose effective presenters
- Watch your terminology and jargon
- Stick to a comprehensive agenda

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# Key success factors for media relations

- Maintain message integrity and consistency
- Build trusting relationships
- Ensure coverage of all technical elements



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# Lessons Learned

- Meet the community on their level and on their terms

- Treat each community member as the most important person in the world

- Check yourself at the door

- Practice best and worst cases



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33

# The Community Relations Model translates into project benefits

| Benefits | TPP and Community Relations techniques |
|---|---|
| Gaining Community Trust | • Broad community representation<br>• Consistent and regular communication<br>• Feedback and follow-up |
| Cost reduction | • Align community and project objectives<br>• Increase use and leverage of local resources |
| Schedule acceleration | • Establish relationships with cooperative landowners<br>• Identify past and future land use<br>• Identify exposure pathways |
| Schedule certainty | • Identify project impacting community details<br>• Alignment of community and project objectives |

# (Cont'd) The Community Relations Model translates into project benefits

| Benefits | TPP and Community Relations techniques |
|----------|----------------------------------------|
| Project efficiency | • Align community and project objectives<br>• Identify critical opportunities, constraints, and information |
| Constituency support for funding and approach | • Align community and project objectives<br>• Establish relationships with cooperative landowners<br>• Community member project ownership |
| Improved characterization | • Identification of past and future land use<br>• Establish relationships with cooperative landowners |
| Positive public perception and image | • Identify competing stakeholders project interests<br>• Identify project-impacting community details<br>• Maintain clear and consistent message |

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# Questions

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