



NEWS RELEASE

Office of the United States Attorney
Eastern District of Texas

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BEAUMONT CONFERENCE ADDRESSES PORT SECURITY

(Beaumont, Texas) A joint Sabine-Neches Area Maritime Security Committee (AMSC) and Anti-Terrorism Advisory Council (ATAC) meeting was held on July 14, 2004 at the John Gray Center located on the campus of Lamar University in Beaumont, Texas.

The AMSC was officially formed in January 2004 pursuant to a Congressional mandate. The Department of Homeland Security, United States Coast Guard was tasked with the forming of the committee in all portions of the country that have ports, maritime industry, and critical infrastructure. The purpose of the committee is to bring local, state and federal law enforcement, private industry and emergency management together to improve maritime domain security. The committee operates through an Executive Steering Committee which identifies maritime domain vulnerabilities, preventative strategies and response to maritime transportation incidents which are addressed by the AMSC. The Committee addresses issues such as security concerns in industry and the joining of efforts by government and private businesses to improve existing security and event responses.

Captain Sharon Richey of the United States Coast Guard is the Chairperson of the AMS. Since arriving at the Marine Safety Office a year ago, she has been

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instrumental in getting the AMSC off the ground and into action.

U.S. Attorney Matthew D. Orwig says, " Captain Richey has her feet on the ground (even though she is in the USCG) and she has greatly improved working relations between the private sector and the government....I am confident that Captain Richey will continue to make Southeast Texas a safer place to live..we are very fortunate to have her in command of our Port."

Captain Sharon Richey said, "The joining of both the AMSC and ATAC for our conference only made sense and, in doing so, we can better serve our community by bringing together our forces and our efforts."

With its concentration dockside, the AMSC is a great compliment to the United States Attorney's Office, Anti-Terrorism Advisory Council (ATAC). Many of the players are the same and the goals are identical. The primary mission of both the AMSC and the ATAC is to prevent or deter terrorist attacks from occurring. Since shortly after the attacks of 9/11, the Attorney General of the United States, John Ashcroft, ordered the creation of ATACs in each judicial district (in our case the Eastern District of Texas). These coalitions are lead by the United States Attorney for each district. United States Attorney, Matthew D. Orwig leads the ATAC and it is coordinated by Assistant U. S. Attorney, Brit Featherston.

The ATAC, like the AMSC, was created by bringing together local, state and federal law enforcement together with private industry and emergency responders to develop those relationships that were absent but needed.

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"Information sharing is the key to awareness and awareness is the key to prevention of the next terrorist attack" says ATAC Coordinator Brit Featherston.

The ATAC strives to provide the latest intelligence regarding terrorism to the membership. The ATAC works closely with and supports the Southeast Texas Joint Terrorism Task Force.

The conference was designed to provide the latest terrorism intelligence to the membership and it addressed local port security issues and initiatives that relate to this period of heightened awareness. The conference also featured Texas Homeland Security Director, Jay Kimbrough, as the keynote speaker and Houston FBI Special Agent in Charge, Roderick L. Beverly addressed the membership.

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