

The Association of Washington Cities (AWC), a non-profit organization composed of all of Washington State's 281 cities and towns, is applying for \$50,000 to provide technical and other assistance to rapidly-growing communities in the state where hazardous liquid and natural gas transmission pipelines currently exist. These activities will enhance public safety and health in these areas by improving local government land use planning and permitting practices in the vicinity of transmission pipelines.

AWC's partners are the Pipeline Safety Trust (PST), a non-profit organization working on pipeline safety issues on behalf of the public; the Washington State Citizens Committee on Pipeline Safety (CCOPS), established by the Washington Legislature to advise state, federal and local government agencies on pipeline safety, routing, construction, operations and maintenance; the Northwest Gas Association (NWGA), a trade association of the Pacific Northwest natural gas industry; the Washington State Association of Counties (WSAC); the Municipal Research and Services Center (MRSC), a non-profit organization providing professional consultation, research and information services to Washington's counties and cities; and the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (WUTC), the state agency that regulates pipelines. Other groups involved in activities such as pipeline operation, land use planning, property development, and emergency planning and response, as well as community organizations, will be invited to participate in this project.

Project Goal and Objectives. The goal of the project is to enhance public safety by improving local government land use planning and permitting practices in the vicinity of transmission pipelines. The objectives that will help meet this goal are: (1) increasing local government and developer awareness of safety concerns as lands in the vicinity of transmission pipelines are developed; (2) providing direct technical assistance to local governments in implementing Recommended Practices as far in advance of these lands being developed as possible; and (3) establishing a structure that fosters long-term collaboration and cooperation between Washington's local governments, pipeline operators, developers, and other affected groups in promoting pipeline safety and resolving issues that may arise in the implementation of these Recommended Practices.

Project Components. The majority of the project's resources will be devoted to direct Technical Assistance activities: MRSC and PST staff knowledgeable about and experienced in implementing these Recommended Practices will—at the request of local officials—go into communities to meet with and assist local planners and decision makers in adopting these measures. To build awareness of the need for these Recommended Practices and the availability of hands-on technical assistance, AWC and its partners will hold sessions on land use planning and pipeline safety at state-wide conferences of local government officials, planning organizations, and similar groups. They will follow up these “awareness” sessions with more in-depth programs—delivered through “webinars” (interactive Internet presentations)—to communities wanting to learn more about enhancing pipeline safety through land use practices. These programs will be open to everyone, although they will be aimed primarily at developers, land use planners, and pipeline operators. All of these activities will be supported and promoted by: (1) the development of a comprehensive web site that will increase awareness of these pipeline safety issues, provide an easy-to-locate and understandable reference for the Recommended Practices, and provide a forum for obtaining and exchanging information about these Recommended Practices; and (2) the publication and distribution of at least two electronic newsletters.

The Project Meets All the Evaluation Criteria. The proposed project meets the grant evaluation criteria in the following ways:

1. **The proposal focuses on areas where a pipeline failure could pose significant risk to people and is likely to encompass unusually sensitive environmental areas.** All local governments in the state's 39 counties will be encouraged to participate. The project, however, is aimed at areas of urban and suburban growth in the 29 counties that contain 95 percent of the state's population; “unusually sensitive environmental areas” are likely to exist within these counties. Of significance is that over 50 percent of the state's major

pipeline miles are located in nine of the 10 fastest growing counties.

2. The applicant and its partners understand the public safety and environmental risks from rapid population growth and concurrent land development in areas where transmission pipelines exist. In 2005, AWC, PST, CCOPS, MRSC, and the WU TC —working cooperatively with pipeline operators, land-use planners and other impacted groups—jointly developed best land-use practices and model planning documents; these materials were disseminated in workshops around the state. In 2006, these project partners issued “Land Use Planning in Proximity to Natural Gas and Hazardous Liquid Transmission Pipelines in Washington State,” a report based on their activities and information gathered at these workshops. The work of these organizations became a significant part of the Best Practices developed for PHMSA’s Pipelines and Informed Planning Alliance (PIPA).

3. The project demonstrates the commitment of the applicant and its partners to open communication with pipeline operators and partnerships with key community members. As noted above (Criterion 2), the applicant and its partners have a long and on-going commitment to open communications and represent a broad spectrum of pipeline safety stakeholders. All of the project’s activities are a continuation of this commitment. All of these activities will facilitate the exchange of information, as well as build greater understanding and trust between the affected groups. When the project ends, the partners will continue to foster the alliances forged before and during the project.

4. The project will improve performance and safety in land use, damage prevention, public education, community awareness, and collaboration between impacted groups. Criterion 2 and 3 (above) discuss how all of the project’s activities have been designed to meet these goals.

5. The Project has clear goals, objectives, milestones, and estimates of project costs. The project goals and objectives are addressed above. Assuming the grant is awarded in the amount requested and received by July 1, 2009), the project milestones are:

- Early September: Technical assistance begins.
- By September 1, 2009: Web site “goes live.”
- Fall 2009: “Awareness” sessions to be presented at state-wide conferences.
- October: In-depth presentations to local communities begin.
- January 2010: First electronic newsletter published.
- Summer 2010: Second electronic newsletter published.

A preliminary timeline and estimates of project costs are attached.

6. There is a plan for evaluating and disseminating results. The number of participants in each activity will be tracked and—when possible--surveyed immediately before and after participating. Actual or planned changes in local zoning/development rules also will be tracked. The results from these evaluations will be used to continually improve the delivery of the project’s services and be disseminated via newsletter, the web site, and through direct communications on a regular basis with involved stakeholders. The partners also intend to share information about the project’s activities and outcomes with national organizations of pipeline operators, local government officials, developers and other stakeholders through direct electronic communications, presentations at national conferences, and the on-going availability of the web site.

7. The project can be replicated throughout the United States. The project can be a model for other states in educating local governments about PIPA Best Practices. All materials developed for this project will be available to requesters. The partners also will provide counsel to other groups across the country wanting to undertake a similar project.