

**DRAFT 1 (12-29-08)**  
**Community Relations Strategy**  
**Bayer CropScience Institute Plant**

**Review of Primary Issues**

- The Institute Community was frightened by the August 28th explosion and subsequent failure to notify emergency responders and neighbors in a timely manner. Neighbors understand we may not be able to keep incidents from happening, but they want to know the plant is doing all it can to keep them safe. That includes emergency response and notification procedures that operate flawlessly. Community members hear about changes we have made inside the plant and worry cost-cutting measures may mean increased risk.
- Historically, accidents and problems with notification are all too familiar to the longer-term residents of the community. From the days after Bhopal and the August 11, 1985 release from the MIC unit, to the Larvin explosion in 1993, plant neighbors fear they are not being protected by the plant. Change of ownership has not diminished these concerns. To the neighbors, the plant is merely the "Institute Plant." Public confidence in plant leadership is diminished.
- The Community Improvement Council (CIC), established to be a liaison between the plant and its near neighbors in the Institute, Pinewood, West Dunbar Sub-Area of Kanawha County, is not as effective as possible. Nick Crosby has been an infrequent participant. Information shared by those who do attend is viewed as cursory and not detailed enough to build citizens' confidence. An opportunity is not being utilized to its fullest.
- Members of the Emergency Response Community have been vocal in their concern about the reporting procedures immediately after the explosion. As with nearby residents, the responders had expected procedures that were established years ago to still be in place and that communications from the plant would be immediate and thorough.
- The old "People Concerned About MIC" activist group, established in the aftermath of Bhopal, has been reactivated with an ominous new leader, Maya Nye. Ms. Nye is the daughter of a Union Carbide retiree and appears to have animosity towards the chemical industry. She has taken an adversarial approach from the beginning and is not retreating. Older and more cooperative past leaders of the group (Mildred Holt, a retired teacher, and Pam Nixon, currently the Citizen Advocate for the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection) have chosen to take a back seat to the more aggressive new leadership. Ms. Nye promises to bring in outside agitators—something the older leaders had, heretofore, not been willing to do. Ms. Nye also has stated publicly she intends to campaign for the removal of MIC and phosgene from the site.

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## Community Relations Strategy

- Be aggressive in correcting the communications issues that occurred after the August 2008 incident to illustrate our commitment to keeping the community safe. Involve Metro 911 and other local responders to insure they agree with the "fix" and will be publicly supportive.
- As part of the outreach to emergency responders, hold a dinner to thank them for their assistance and for their work in revitalizing the emergency response plan. The dinner also can be an opportunity to make donations to the response community anticipated through the Supplemental Environmental Payments. To avoid the appearance of using these government-mandated donations for publicity, refrain from actively seeking media coverage. The responders may well initiate coverage on their own.
- Meet with the County Commissioners (separately, to avoid Sunshine Law issues) who have ultimate authority over the unincorporated Institute community about the improvements and reinforcements to the emergency response notification plan as soon as possible. Involve Nick Crosby in dialogue with the Commissioners so they get to know him personally and build confidence in his leadership at the plant.
- Sponsor a Sub-Area emergency response drill. Involve the CIC in planning so the entire community will participate. CIC members can lead the effort to include local citizens who can practice shelter-in-place techniques as well as be observers of the drill. Include media in the drill, therefore guaranteeing coverage. (This has been done in past years but not recently.)
- Increase Nick Crosby's presence at the CIC meetings. The key leaders in the Sub-Area regularly attend the meetings and have used them for many years to communicate with the plant. Allow the key citizens to get to know Nick personally and build confidence in his leadership of the plant. Give Nick the chance to better understand citizen concerns and interests so he may be more responsive to them. Make these meetings a priority and, working with the chair and facilitator, interject more Bayer messages and dialogue.
- Build a better relationship with Bill Raglin with regular and detailed plant visits. Bill is an Institute resident, leader of the Institute, Pinewood, West Dunbar Sub-Area, president of the Kanawha County School Board and a retiree from the Safety Department at the plant. He has concerns about the safety of plant operations, perhaps in part because he is not as aware of activities in the plant as in the past. To date, he has remained relatively silent and avoided openly criticizing the plant. His enhanced involvement with the plant and potential future support will give the Institute community one of their own as an expert to whom they can turn for understanding of, and confidence in, plant operations.
- Other chemical companies in the Kanawha Valley appear to have a greater presence than does Bayer, despite the fact that Bayer has not had the head-count reductions of some of the others. We need to raise our overall presence by carefully chosen community involvement. For example, volunteers in the Valley are asking for disaster kit supplies for use by AmeriCorps, a national community

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service organization sponsored locally by the United Way of Central West Virginia. Contributing to this cause might be a good fit.

- Create a website for the Bayer Institute site. Involve the CIC in determining specifics of content so it will meet community needs and be supported by key leaders. One possible use for the site would be in providing information to the public during a crisis event.
- Our goal with People Concerned About MIC should be to marginalize them. Build the stronger ties with the rest of the Kanawha Valley, keep operations safe, rebuild confidence in emergency response communications, and the activists will become irrelevant. This is especially true in a difficult economy where good jobs mean so much to the area. Interaction with People Concerned should be kept in the public arena where they cannot distort the facts. Treat them civilly so observers will not feel the need to come to their defense. Allow them to seem uncivil. Local citizens have, historically, not supported fanatical, negative activism.
- Take a similar approach to *The Charleston Gazette*. For as many years as it has been in print, *The Gazette* has chosen to be anti-business and champion environmental activists' causes. Marginalize its effectiveness by treating its reporters with respect but avoid one-on-one interviews with them whenever possible. Make statements in the public arena where others will report. Release information timed for the *Charleston Daily Mail* when practical. Remember the *Charleston Daily Mail* has a strong circulation in the Kanawha Valley but *The Charleston Gazette* is read throughout the state. Use local television stations and *The State Journal*, a weekly business publication circulated statewide, to counter *The Gazette's* attacks.
- Over the next several months, develop a "positioning plan" for Nick Crosby. Nick's emergence as the new face will signal a change, and "change" appears to be what the public wants. Position Nick with local media editors/publishers/news directors by setting up lunches. Involve Nick in key civic organizations in the greater Kanawha Valley such as the Charleston Rotary Club where all city's movers and shakers attend. As Nick becomes the face and voice of the Bayer Institute, the impersonal "corporate walls" will start coming down.
- Develop a Community Relations Strategy timeline with assigned responsibilities and check points for evaluation for 2009.

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