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- ♦ The big news this week has been the oil spill near the Galapagos Islands, which resulted from the grounding of the Ecuadorian vessel "Jessica" on January 16. The vessel began leaking fuel three days later, and current estimates place the volume of diesel fuel spilled at about 190,000 gallons. In the aftermath of the event, the Ecuadorian government requested assistance through the U.S. State Department, and the U.S. Coast Guard sent oil spill control equipment from its Gulf Strike Team. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration ("NOAA") is also on site to assist the Ecuadorian government with forecasting the path of the spill and mapping strategies to minimize damage to wildlife, along with monitoring the effects of the spill. Coast Guard personnel have recovered some 10,000 gallons of diesel fuel from the damaged tanker, and have assisted in boom deployment and dispersant application activities. As of this writing, the ship has been further damaged by heavy swells and is listing sharply to starboard, making additional pumping operations impossible. Recent favorable winds in the area have helped to push the oil away from the islands. The clean up effort is expected to cost Ecuador more than USD \$2 million. The Ecuadorian ship owner, Acotramar, will be held responsible for these costs, although the ship lacks spill insurance. (*Various Sources*) ***Editor's Note: After learning that government resources had been deployed to the spill, SCAA contacted the Coast Guard immediately to offer the assistance of the private sector response community if needed. Similarly, we sent e-mail to the Ecuadorian Ministry of Environment ("MOE") introducing SCAA and promoting the availability, professionalism and experience of our membership to assist with the response effort. The Coast Guard informed us that they submitted a list of qualified response contractors to both the State Department and the Ecuadorian MOE. Both Captain Dave Westerholm and Captain Harlan Henderson have been very cooperative and open in their discussions with us to provide updates on the situation in the Galapagos Islands. These actions exemplify the spirit and intent of the Partnership Action Team, and we look forward to future cooperative efforts.***
- ♦ The U.S. Department of Justice announced in a January 19 press release that an \$83.5 million settlement had been reached regarding claims that arose following the "Morris J. Berman" oil spill in 1994. As you recall, the barge grounded off the coast of Puerto Rico while under tow, and spilled 800,000 gallons of oil in 1994. Parties to the settlement include the Caribbean Petroleum Corporation, MetLife Capital Corporation, and the Water Quality Insurance Syndicate. The settlement includes the reimbursement of the U.S. for the costs the government incurred during spill remediation, and also includes damages claims submitted by

fishermen, hotels, and small businesses. It also compensates natural resources trustees in the U.S. and Puerto Rico for injuries to natural resources and for assessment costs. Also under the settlement, \$60 million will be deposited into the Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund – the largest recovery in fund history. (Sources: *DOJ press release* and *Maritime Items*)

- ◆ The U.S. Coast Guard has extended for another three years the 24-hour requirement for deployment of salvage and marine firefighting capability relating to vessel response plans. The extension of the suspension period has been undertaken to allow the agency to prepare an initial regulatory flexibility analysis to determine the potential impact of the rule on small

businesses per the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act. The Coast Guard expects to complete the analysis and publish a notice of proposed rulemaking during the year 2001. (Source: *Federal Register*, Volume 66, Number 11, pages 3876-3878, January 17, 2001 Edition)

- ◆ For many small and mid-sized companies trying to cut internal costs, the expense of implementing ISO 14000 standards may seem wasteful. However, many large businesses (e.g., Ford, IBM, DaimlerChrysler, GM, etc.) and the government are requiring certification to this standard, and competitors who have obtained certification could eventually squeeze companies that aren't compliant out of business. Not to worry – there are several new tools available that can help small to mid-sized businesses comply with ISO 14000. According to *Environmental Protection* magazine, many companies are turning to the Internet for help instead of outside (and often expensive) consultants. Web sites including www.ISOft14000.com focus on the needs of small businesses, and provide a database of linked sites, discussion groups, and web-based assessment tools. The site also offers a software package that is capable of assessing, implementing, and auditing an environmental management system that is appropriate for small business.
- ◆ Representative J.C. Watts (R-Oklahoma) is urging House Speaker Dennis Hastert (R-Illinois) to form a new Select Committee on Domestic Terrorism to focus on the issue. Representative Watts states that more than 40 federal agencies and 14 committees on Capitol Hill have responsibilities relating to domestic counter-terrorism preparedness and response initiatives - making congressional oversight virtually impossible. (Source: *USA Today*)
- ◆ Seatrade's "Safe-Shipping" conference will be held April 10-11, 2001 at the Royal College of Surgeons of England, London in conjunction with the Seatrade Awards Ceremony Dinner that will take place April 9 at Guildhall. The theme of the conference is "Raising the Safety Bar – Improving Marine Safety in the 21st Century", and International Maritime Organization Secretary-General William O'Neil will give the keynote address for the event. For more information on the conference or the dinner, contact The Seatrade Organization, Seatrade House, 42 North Station Road, Colchester, Essex, C01 1RB, UK, telephone +44-1206-545121, facsimile +44-1206-545190, E-mail to events@seatrade-golbal.com. You can also visit the conference web site at www.safe-shipping.com.
- ◆ **Work/Life/Health:** Conflict is common and can be useful on any healthy team. Without conflict, bad ideas go unchallenged and group members are less honest with each other. To keep conflict from getting out of hand during meetings, try these tips: (1.) **Focus on ideas, not people.** If a bad idea comes up during a meeting, make sure others focus on the worth of the idea and not the competence of the individual suggesting it. (2.) **Acknowledge every idea's merits.** When a debate heats up, settle things down by singling out the team member who is most upset and acknowledge the merits of his/her position. You can then suggest other lines of thinking. (3.) **Use smoothing statements.** Don't let team members take sides, and encourage them to consider the other side's argument. (4.) **Get some distance.** If you can't get the group to reach a consensus, step back and analyze the situation. You will then have time to regroup, suggest revisions, raise questions, and challenge team members to do the same. (Source: *Team Management Briefings*)
- ◆ **Quote of the Week:** "Try not to become a success, but rather try to become a man of value."
– Albert Einstein (1879-1955)