



**34-01**

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**August 31, 2001**

- ◆ On September 26, 2001 from 2:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. EST, a live and interactive teleconference entitled "WMD Incident Recovery – Creating Order Out of Chaos" will be conducted. The program is a part of "Live Response" – a recurring live and interactive satellite broadcast series offering WMD related awareness information to the country's civilian, federal, and military emergency response communities. The program is free and is broadcast at numerous sites across the country. It is also web cast in real time via the Internet at the same date and time of its satellite broadcast. For more information on this program and the event, contact the office of Ed Kronholm – Satellite Programs Coordinator – at 877-820-0305, e-mail [dlnets@aol.com](mailto:dlnets@aol.com). You can also visit the following web site for information on the Live Response, including sponsors, availability, program objectives and overview, guest panelists and more: [www.dlnets.com/ntpt\\_26Sept01.htm](http://www.dlnets.com/ntpt_26Sept01.htm). Information on the web cast can be found on-line at <http://terrorism.spjc.edu/>
- ◆ A free software program that will convert most units used in spill response operations, environmental consulting, spill equipment, maintenance, design and use is available at the following web site: <http://www.joshmadison.com/software/convert/download.asp> The program, called Convert 4.10, also has engineering, technical, and scientific parameters, as well as all Imperial and Metric conversions. The program download is a "zip" file, so you'll need to have WinZip or other decompression software on your system to access the executable program.
- ◆ The Department of Transportation will ask the public and industry for comments on the development of guidelines to help determine when a reasonable person offering, accepting or transporting hazardous materials would be deemed to have knowledge of facts giving rise to a violation of federal law on the subject. A public meeting will be hosted by the DOT on November 14, 2001 to discuss the issue. (Source: *Lloyd's List*) ***We'll keep you posted on the details of the meeting as the date draws near.***
- ◆ ***Real life economics . . .*** Employers are beginning to prepare for a significant increase in health insurance premiums next year. Industry analysts expect the health insurance premiums to increase by 13%-20% or more next year– the highest single rate hike in a decade – due to increased costs for drugs, hospital care, and doctors. Moreover, the patient's bill of rights that is now before Congress would create national rules for managed care plans, and could raise the premiums an additional 4.2% over the next 5 years. (Source: *USA Today*)

**Editor's Note: This is a good example of the type of overhead cost private sector responders must defray – one of many overhead costs that can only be off-set through the utilization of the services offered by these companies.**

- ♦ An interesting article recently appeared in the *USA Today* about small business - 5.6 million of them in the U.S. - and their use of the World Wide Web. A report on the subject was prepared by the National Federation of Independent Businesses ("NFIB"), and the group found that some 1.6 million small businesses would launch web sites within the next year. However, many of these sites will simply act as electronic brochures, with no opportunities for customers to purchase products on line. The group found that 35% of small company's (i.e.,

those with less than 250 workers) surveyed had web sites, and 65% of those with web sites don't let consumers purchase products on-line. Some reasons that small businesses struggle with fully embracing web technology: (A.) **Lack of support.** Many companies don't have time to maintain a web site, particularly one that is capable of e-commerce. (B.) **Uncertain payoff.** Some companies believe an e-commerce enabled web site would cost more to maintain and/or would be more trouble than it's worth. (C.) **Wrong product.** Some 77% of those surveyed say their product or service does not lend itself to direct on-line sales. The NFIB study also showed that some 43% of small business are not on-line at all and have no e-mail.

- ◆ **You can run, but you can't hide . . .** Earlier this month, it was reported that police were tracking an unnamed vessel that was suspected of spilling oil off the Swedish coast. Police anticipated carrying out a port state control in the vessel's next port of call to check the allegations, and its actions were based upon a tip they received from Denmark. The resulting spill was 14 nautical miles long and ½ mile wide, floating in the German-Swedish exclusive economic zone. (Source: *Lloyd's List*)
- ◆ The Commercial Service of the U.S. Embassy, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, has announced a cost-effective method available for U.S. exporters to enter or expand in the Malaysian market. They are organizing an American Products Literature Center (APLC) at the 7<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Council On Petroleum (ASCOPE) Conference & Exhibition, which will be held in Kuala Lumpur on 5-8 November, 2001. ASCOPE is the preeminent oil and gas shows for the ASEAN region and will attract decision makers and exhibitors from all over the world. In brief, the APLC is a catalog show, where we will be displaying product literature from U.S. firms, and where we will be registering relevant visitors interested in contacting the U.S. exhibitors. The contact information of the interested visitors will be forwarded to the APLC exhibitors about two weeks after the show. **If you are interested in taking part in this APLC, please send at least 20 sets of your product literature, as well as a check in the amount of US\$450, made payable to "International Trade Administration" by September 18, 2001.** We strongly suggest using a courier service to send your literature package, at U.S. Embassy, The Commercial Service, 376 Jalan Tun Razak, 50400 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, Attn: Desmond Cheng, Senior Trade Specialist, telephone +60-3-2168-4868, facsimile +60-3-2142-1866, e-mail: [desmond.cheng@mail.doc.gov](mailto:desmond.cheng@mail.doc.gov). You should also include with the literature contact information for your company, a 50-word description of your company and its products/services, specifics on what you are seeking (e.g., joint venture, distributor, agent, sales representative, new business prospects, etc.).
- ◆ **Work/Life/Health:** Given current economic conditions and the increasing number of layoffs that are occurring, you may receive questions from employees about job security. Don't make promises of job security to at-will employees, or you'll lose a great deal of legal latitude if you have to let them go later. Keep these tips in mind: (1.) Remind employees who ask about job security that you can't guarantee their future employment because market trends, competition and other factors can affect the business and their jobs in a number of ways. (2.) Help employees to understand that your inability to provide them with long-term employment commitments is of a legal – not personal – nature. (3.) Make sure employees are aware of at-will disclaimers by highlighting them on a regular basis. (4.) Don't let veteran employees convince you that you've made an unspoken promise to them simply because you've retained them. Longevity alone does not alter an at-will relationship. (Source: *Manager's Legal Bulletin*)
- ◆ **Quote of the Week:** "So long as we love, we serve; so long as we are loved by others, I would almost say that we are indispensable; and no man is useless while he has a friend." – Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1894), *Across the Plains [1892]. Lay Morals*